



## CHILD FOUNDATION

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The Child Foundation for Study and Research into Childhood and Adolescence was set up in 1998 by the association “S.O.S. Il Telefono Azzurro – National Helpline for the Prevention of Child Abuse”. Its funds come from initiatives promoted by the Foundation itself, contributions, legacies and donations in favour of the Foundation.

The aim of the Child Foundation is to promote a child-centred culture through a close examination of the causes and treatments of physical and mental diseases, as well as of behavioural and mood difficulties in children and adolescents. According to recent research findings, disorders and dysfunctions are the result of complex and lifetime interactions between biological and environmental factors. Research in biology, paediatrics, developmental psychology and child psychiatry can provide criteria for studying risk and protective factors for child development, as well as the most effective treatments for child physical and mental disorders.

Given these premises, Child Foundation is aimed at encouraging mental health researchers, of all levels and from all fields, to enhance their motivation, interest and competence in the field of child and adolescent mental health.

The Foundation has the following objectives:

- to support research on developmental psychopathology, particularly on child biological, cognitive, emotional and social development;
- to promote research methodology skills among mental health professionals working with children and adolescents;
- to support the following disciplines: child psychiatry, pediatrics, genetics, psychology, neuroscience, molecular biology, epidemiology;
- to translate scientific evidences into concrete practices and to spread knowledge among the public and the professionals, through awareness and training activities.

In order to fulfill its goals, the Foundation promotes the following activities:

- Training of young researchers who want to acquire specific knowledge in the area of developmental pathology and child mental health research methodology: with regard to this issue, short training courses on specific topics are developed and scholarships are created. The impact of traumatic events in children and adolescents and trauma research methodology represent one of the main topics of interest.
- Supporting career advancement of clinical researchers who are willing to be involved in developmental psychopathology research.
- Supporting research programs and projects (particularly if focused on: short and long-term impact of abuse and other types of trauma; innovative and effective prevention programs; impact of the experience on neurobiological and mental development).
- Promoting the creation of international research and intervention networks.

- **Trauma, emergency and development in child and adolescence June 28 - 29, 1999 – Treviso (Italy)** - The meeting was focused on trauma and emergency issues. On this occasion the new “Research and Crisis Intervention Center” was officially established. It was inspired by the work and the methodology of the Child Development and Community Programme developed by the Yale University’s Child Study Center, New Haven, USA.
- **Child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health in the eastern Mediterranean (Sharm El Sheikh; February 10-15, 2000).** Leading experts on child mental health from the East Mediterranean area joined this meeting to discuss about child and adolescents mental health. During the congress the EMACAPAP association was founded, with the specific aim to promote child and adolescent psychiatry study and research in the Middle East.
- **Genetics of autism (Modena – Bologna (Italy); March 17–23, 2000)** Some of the most qualified international scientists were invited by Child Foundation to discuss about the genetics of autism in order to share, develop and integrate research studies and methodologies. Work sessions were focused on child and adolescent psychiatry and genetics. To name just a few:
  - Nature and Culture. Challenges and Possible Solutions. An international conference with the opening lecture held by Prof. Sir Michael Rutter.
  - Autism and Pervasive Development Disorders. New Knowledge and new Interventions. An international meeting on ethics and social issues related to autism and other forms of mental disorders.
  - Training Workshop on Assessment, Intervention and Neurobiology of Autism and Related Conditions. The meeting was attended by the major world-wide experts and the most active Italian child and adolescent psychiatrists on research and clinical activities.
- **Child abuse and neglect July 4 – 5, 2001 – Parma (Italy)** Two days workshop organised in collaboration with the Italian Paediatrics Society, the Department of Social and Prevention Paediatrics (University of Parma), and the Department of Psychiatry and Mental health (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia). The meeting was aimed at defining and sharing effective methodologies and guidelines for paediatricians’ training on child and adolescent abuse and neglect.
- **Second European Research Seminar in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Development Psychopathology and Treatment Evaluation**  
September 3 - 8, 2001 - Camposampiero (PD) The Seminar was organised in association with ESCAP (European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions) and IACAPAP. It was structured as an intensive one-week workshop during which the most recent studies and research models on developmental psychopathology were discussed. Participants came from more than 18 countries.
- **Traumas in Developmental Psychopathology** September 4, 2001 - Treviso  
The Foundation Child organised an international conference with major child and adolescent psychiatry experts, on the topic of violence and trauma impact on child and adolescent development. This was also an opportunity for the official establishment of the International Child and Research Center connected to IACAPAP , ESCAP and many other international associations.
- **Caring for Children and Adolescents with Mental Disorders:Setting WHO Directions** January 31 - February 1, 2002 - Geneva (Switzerland)

The Foundation supported the meeting organised by the WHO - World Health Organisation, which involved the major worldwide experts on child and adolescent disorders.

➤ **A day's study dedicated to Prof. Donald J. Cohen**  
***Child and Adolescent Care: from the Institutions to Scientific Communities***

June 5, 2002 – Treviso The Foundation supported this meeting dedicated to the memory

of Prof. Donald Cohen, Sterling Professor of Child Psychiatry and Psychology at Yale University (USA). The technical and professional contributions brought by Prof. Donald J. Cohen to these important topics were deeply discussed and analysed. It was an important opportunity for investigating the institutional network for children care and for the collaboration with the scientific community.

➤ **Third European Research Seminar in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**  
***Design and Assessment***

September 29 - October 4, 2002 - Camposampiero (PD)

The seminar was organised together with ESCAP (European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry) and IACAPAP. The seminar was divided into three workgroups, each one dealing with current topics such as neurobiology, epidemiology, research, observation and critical evaluation of the clinical research studies presented by the 31 young child psychiatrists coming from 16 different countries.

➤ **Research and Assessment in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**

September 30, 2002 – Treviso A day's study organised by the Foundation in association with ESCAP and IACAPAP, with the kind participation of Prof. Helmut Remschmidt, Paul Lombroso and Andrew Pickles, major international experts on child and adolescent psychiatry who discussed about genetics studies and difficulties in developmental age data analysis

➤ **Children and War: the Effects of War Conflicts on Developmental Age**

October 2, 2002 – Venice The Foundation Child, in association with Telefono Azzurro, organised this international meeting in memory of Donald Cohen, Sterling Professor of Child Psychiatry and Psychology at Yale University (USA). During the meeting, the psychological and traumatic aspects of developmental age in the Arabic-Israeli conflict context were thoroughly discussed thanks to the important contribution brought by J. F. Leckman, Jocelyn Yosse Hattab and Amira Seif El Din.

➤ **Autism: from Research to Clinical Practice**

March 17 - 21, 2003 - Rome

One week long of study and analysis of the main aspects of autism, structured in two main appointments:

• *International conference* opened to a close group of selected participants held at the Istituto Superiore di Sanità in Rome in collaboration with the Yale Child Study Center (Yale University, USA), IACAPAP, the Chair of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, the associations Autism Italy and Autism Europe and the kind support of SINPIA. The event was an important opportunity for discussing and comparing the different methodologies of intervention, with the participation of many CSC members such as Fred Volkmar, Sara Sparrow, Emily Rubin, Michael Powers, Peter Doehring and Matthew State.

• *International Course* on the main aspect of autism and pervasive developmental disorders. The course, organised in collaboration with Autism Europe Association, was attended by the main European and North American professionals in order to build new models of intervention in child and adolescent psychiatry common to the international scientific world.

- **Children Protection in times of War, Terrorism and Natural Disasters**  
July 16 - 19, 2003 – Rome The meeting aimed at discussing the main aspects and the current developments of trauma in children and adolescents as a consequence of war, terrorism and natural disasters. The event was joined by the major experts of the world such as Claude Chemtob (Univ. of Hawaii, USA), Nathaniel Laor (Univ. of Tel-Aviv, Israel), Alexander McFarlane (Univ. of Adelaide, Australia), Robert Pynoos (UCLA, USA), Helmut Remschmidt (Univ. of Marburg, Germany) and Lynne Jones (UK). The end of the meeting resulted in the creation of *The Rome Declaration on Caring for Children in Wartime, Terrorism and Natural Disasters*.
- **Second Research Seminar in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health in Eastern Mediterranean *Depression and Related Disorders***  
February 27 - March 4, 2004 (Egypt) - Sharm El Sheik Second research seminar on mental health during developmental age in the Arabian world, sponsored by the Foundation Child, IACAPAP and EMACAPAP. The organisation of this meeting reveals the true desire of the foundation to promote and support intensive international research seminars to young postgraduate Arabian students in child psychiatry and psychology.
- **Fourth European Research Seminar in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. *Treatment Evaluation in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*** March 14 - 20, 2004 - Camposampiero (PD) Fourth research seminar on mental health in child and adolescence, organized by the Foundation Child, IACAPAP and ESCAP. The main topic of the seminar was Treatment Evaluation in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Participants had the opportunity to show and discuss the research projects they were working on in their own countries with the supervision of the senior experts.
- **Two days' study seminar on *New perspectives in Pediatrics and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*** March 10 - 11, 2004 – Parma Foundation Child sponsored a symposium held by Italian pediatric and child and adolescent psychiatric professionals in order to share common areas of study in research and education.
- **XVI World Congress of IACAPAP Congress *Facilitating Pathways - Care, Treatment and Prevention in Child and Adolescent Mental Health*** 22 - 26 August, 2004 - Berlin, (Germany) The main theme of the congress is a thorough review of all measures of care, treatment and prevention in an international perspective, thanks to participants from all over the world. During the IACAPAP Congress, the Foundation Child sponsored a list of symposiums:
  - The Impact of Trauma and Disaster on Children, speakers: Prof. E. Caffo, Prof. J. Leckman, Massimo Ammaniti, Hans Steiner, Alexander McFarlane.
  - Child and Family Focused Interventions after Trauma and Disasters, speakers: Prof. L. Wolmer, prof. J. Fayyad, Prof. I. Zaqout, Prof. E. Galili-Weisstub.
  - Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Interventions in the Disability, with Particular Regard to the Mental Retardation, speakers: Dr. M. Belfer, Dr. C. Ruggerini, Prof. C. Barnes, Dr. E. Pupulin, Dr. W. Eigner, Dr. A. Guidi.
  - ESCAP Symposium hosted by the 16th World Congress of IACAPAP on "Pharmacotherapy in Children and Adolescents in Europe, speakers: Dr. A. Martin, Prof. J. Fuentes, Prof. A. von Knorring, Prof. Dr. E. Schulz.
- **Career Prize to Professor Giovanni Bollea** 24 August, 2004 - Italian Embassy in Berlin, (Germany) During the IACAPAP Congress, H. E. the Italian Ambassador Silvio Fagiolo, kindly permitted to organise at the Italian Embassy in Berlin the reception sponsored by the Foundation Child, to celebrate Giovanni Bollea, Emeritus Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Rome University "La Sapienza".

- **XXI S.I.N.P.I.A. National Congress Clinical *Treatment in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*** 7 - 11 November, 2004 – Modena This meeting aims at offering an opportunity to child psychiatry professionals to discuss on methodology, epistemology, current knowledge and new perspectives for child and adolescent psychiatry. During the SINPIA Congress the Foundation promoted the Psychopharmacology course on: *New Perspectives on Child and Adolescent Development Psychopharmacology* attended by the major experts of the field such as R. Klein (New York University, USA), B. Leventhal (Chicago University, USA), B. Birmaher (Pittsburgh University, USA) and L. Scahill (Yale University, USA).
  
- **5th EUROPEAN RESEARCH SEMINAR IN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY Clinical Research: Design, Assessment and Evaluation** April, 10 - 15, 2005 - Bocca di Magra (SP) – Italy The seminar organized by Foundation Child, IACAPAP and ESCAP involved a group of researchers among the major international experts. The main topic of the seminar was *Treatment Evaluation in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* and the purpose of the meeting was to train participants treatment evaluation in child and adolescent psychiatry both at a scientific and cultural level in order to establish a network of research without cultural or geographic boundaries.
  
- **Second Research Seminar in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health in Eastern Mediterranean *Anxiety Disorders Diagnosis and Treatment, and Research Project Design*** February, 26 - March 2, 2005 - Sharm El Sheik, Egypt The Second Edition of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Research Seminar supported by Foundation Child in collaboration with IACAPAP and EMACAPAP this year focused on anxiety disorders. The meeting allowed 30 young researchers coming from 11 countries in the Eastern Mediterranean area to compare their practices with the most well-known international experts in the field of Child Psychiatry. The Seminar offered the possibility to people coming from countries that are historically in conflict to exchange views and open a dialogue that goes beyond scientific boundaries and that we hope will lead to future collaborations.
  
- **6th European Research Seminar in Child and Adolescent psychiatry *Clinical Studies: Design, Assessment and Evaluation*** May, 7 - 12, 2006 - Bocca di Magra (SP), Italy The 6th edition of the European Research Seminar in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry was organized by Foundation Child in collaboration with IACAPAP and ESCAP. The 30 selected participants had the opportunity to exchange knowledge and expertise both with the Professors of the Faculty and among themselves. This year for the first time was organised a writing workshop which aimed at offering the young researchers the tools to structure and write a scientific article. The meeting was also a wonderful opportunity for young researchers to meet their colleagues from different countries and establish connections that will surely lead to future collaborations. The experts that formed the faculty were: Prof. Caffo (Fondazione and ESCAP President), Prof. Belfer (IACAPAP President), Prof. Remschmidt (IACAPAP past president), P. Graham (UK), P. Lombroso (Yale), J. Hebebrand (Essen), J. Naegele (Wesleyan), E. Garralda (London), A. Warnke (Wuerzburg), B. Falissard (Paris), B. Leventhal (Illinois), B. Nurcombe (Adelaide), H. van Engeland (Utrecht). The participants, selected by an international commission, came from the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Nederland, Norway, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Swiss, Turkey, and UK.
  
- **3rd EMACAPAP Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Training Seminar *Autism Spectrum Disorders and Research Design*** April, 3th - 7th 2006 - Djerba, Tunisia

Foundation Child, in collaboration with EMACAPAP and IACAPAP, supported the 3rd Training Seminar in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The seminar was a wonderful opportunity for young researchers to spend a week in close contact with important experts in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry coming from European, American and, this year for the first time, Israeli Universities. They were given the opportunity to present their research projects and be advised by senior psychiatrists and researchers on how to further develop the project.

- **August 25-29, 2007 XIII Congress European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (ESCAP).** The Congress was the most important meeting in Europe of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists in 2007. It presented a unique opportunity to develop European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and to strengthen the links between European and World Societies. During ESCAP the Foundation Child promoted symposia and training courses on:
  - Symposium New Perspectives on Trauma and disaster intervention
  - Symposium ERICE
  - Symposium POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND WELLBEING PROMOTION IN ADOLESCENCE
  - Symposium DIVERSE APPLICATIONS OF THE ACHENBACH SYSTEM OF EMPIRICALLY BASED ASSESSMENT (ASEBA)
  - Symposium HELPLINES AND INTERNET: INNOVATIVE INTERVENTION IN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH
  - Training course “Understanding and intervening with children, families and communities exposed to trauma and disaster “, chaired by W.Yule and N.Laor
  - Training course “BULLYING AND HEALTH RISKS” chaired by J. Srabstein
  
- **New Perspectives on Child and Adolescent Psychiatry** March 31st , 2009 – Florence International seminar promoted by Foundation Child on March 31st, titled "New Perspectives on Child and Adolescent Psychiatry"
  
- **The Impact of the New Diagnostic System on the future of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry** April, 2nd, 2009 – Florence Discussion about promoted by Foundation Child “The Impact of the New Diagnostic System on the future of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry”

### **Rome group**

Between the 16th and 19th of July, 2003, a group of world professional leaders in the area of child trauma from North America, Australia, Europe and Asia, gathered in Rome to present their clinical findings and research advances as well as to seek out a way to integrate these with the current state of knowledge in this area. The meeting of this established “Rome Group” was organized under the auspices of Foundation Child (Italy) and the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (IACAPAP). As a result of their deliberations, the experts signed the Declaration of Rome, asking Governments worldwide for an increased investment in prevention, treatment and research in the area of caring for children affected by trauma. The mission of the Rome Group is to promote a major understanding of the severe consequences of childhood exposure to trauma, as well as to develop effective interventions that focus on the needs of the individual, the family, and the community and to raise standards of care throughout the world. As a result, leaders in the field of child trauma are being sought out constantly and are joining this important group. The Rome Group met a second time on the occasion of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions, which took place in Berlin in 2004. During the 13th International Congress of the European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry they presented advances in trauma research with children and new intervention models both in the form of symposia and as a training course.

## RESEARCHES

The Foundation acts in the following areas:

**Training of young researchers** who wish to acquire specific knowledge in the development pathology area. The starting clinical discipline or research area is not a circumstance, however particular prominence is given to child psychiatry, psychology and to other disciplines that would provide scientific methods and knowledge useful in these fields in order to cure and promote childhood and adolescence. The training activities include intensive training on specific subjects and the creation of scholarships.

**Support for career advancement for clinical researches** who wish to pursue a systematic research on development psychopathology. Including both academics at the outset of their university career who have completed their clinical training and who intend to pursue a career in clinical research, as well as researchers already trained who require support to continue their researches in developmental psychopathology. In these cases the support shall last from one to several years following the standard practice for career advancement.

**Support for research programmes and projects.** The Foundation offers support for the start-off research projects particularly relevant to the topic, also by financing laboratory equipment and materials. This kind of financial aid is specifically connected to research programmes and projects clearly defined and dedicated to development psychopathology. Among the favourite research areas are: short and long-term impact of abuse, neglect and other types of trauma; new and effective methods of prevention and treatment; the impact of experience on the development of the brain and behaviour during the first years of life and research on development psychopathology.

### **Innovative training and communication.**

The Foundation is particularly interested in expanding research groups and developing the communication network between clinicians and researchers throughout the world. The Foundation undertakes to support training initiatives of various kind including: work-groups, exchange programmes with foreign universities, scientific consultations and meetings with clinicians and researchers of different levels of experience in order to share their knowledge and develop new areas of research and study. Since 2000, the Foundation promotes research and study's activities on childhood and adolescence on the most salient topics, by allocating scholarships contributions to the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia for a **Ph.D programme on "Human Psychobiology"** in order to implement the research on genetics origins of children and adolescent diseases, trauma, emergencies and mental disease in children and adolescent. In addition, on June 2003, thanks to the Foundation's support, the same University proclaimed a grant for a **research programme on "Educational Models on Network Services Quality Management in Emergency Situations Involving Children and Adolescents"**. Every year, the Foundation Child also promotes a **Ph.D on "Neuroscience and Psychopathology during Developmental Age and Adolescence"** with the Department of Experimental Medicine of the University of L'Aquila.

## ALLOCATION CRITERIA

The Foundation chooses to support projects on the basis of the following characteristics:

- Previous results achieved and the potential of the applicant;
- Specific attention shall be paid to the diffusion of a child centred culture and to the chance for success of the project;
- National demand for a particular training or a particular plan of activity;
- The opportunity to promote international collaboration and to share knowledge and resources.

## MASTER

The Foundation Child, in association with the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia as well as Telefono Azzurro, has established the following Masters in ([www.npi.unimo.it](http://www.npi.unimo.it)):

- **“Expert in Evaluation, Diagnosis and Intervention in Child and Adolescent Abuse Context: Mean and Methodology”**, with the aim of providing the participants with an intense training on children and adolescent distresses, with particular reference to abuse and mistreatment and to the integrated action of the diverse professionals on the territory.
- **“Psychiatric and Psychology Jurisdiction Expert”** in order to supply the participants with an intensive training on the peritoneal evaluation, especially directed to the human developmental area.

## PUBLICATIONS

- ***Caring for Children and Adolescents with Mental Disorders: Setting WHO Directions*** The handbook, published together with the World Health Organisation, summarises all the presentations held during the meeting on January, 2002. (Geneva; 2003)
- ***90 Anni di Futuro (90 Years of Future)*** Celebrative biography of Giovanni Bollea on his 90th birthday. Bollea is Emeritus Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at "La Sapienza" University in Rome and joined the Child Foundation Scientific Committee since its beginnings. Furthermore Bollea has given Italian Child and Adolescent Psychiatry a new perspective in order to track a new approach to children and adolescents mental diseases. (Rome; 2003)
- ***Promoting activities sensitive to vulnerable life stages*** published in cooperation with WHO EUROPE - World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe
- ***Promoting Resilience and Psychological Well-Being in Vulnerable Life Stages*** Editorial for Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics Vol. 77, No. 6, 2008

## OTHER PROJECTS

The Foundation Child promotes research and study's activities on childhood and adolescence by allocating a financial aid to the World Health Organisation in order to support research programmes on children mental health, by co-organising, as well, seminars and meetings attended by the most leading experts of the mental health and pediatrics field coming from all over the world.

- During the IACAPAP Congress in Stockholm in 1998, Foundation Child sponsored a symposium on the psychological and traumatic aspects on child and adolescent in wartime context, with the participation of many child and adolescent psychiatrists and childhood experts coming from countries involved in war conflicts. The seminar launched a programme that during the following years resulted in the creation of *The Rome Declaration on Caring for Children in Wartime, Terrorism and Natural Disasters*, during the IACAPAP Congress in Rome in 2003.

- **Class Activation Program** - Intervention in Mass Disaster Context Centered on Children's Needs. Psychopathology researches on children and adolescent following a mass disaster, show that from 25 to 80% of the cases suffer of psychiatric disturbances that range from post-traumatic stress disorders, general anxiety, separation anxiety, agoraphobias, panic attacks, major depression, behavioral disturbances to problems connected to alcohol abuse. In Italy, the intervention programme was lead in the suburbs of the Molise region affected by the earthquake in 2002. The CAP-Molise project came from a collaboration between the Child Foundation, the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Chair of the Modena and Reggio Emilia University and the Cohen-Harris Centre for Trauma and Disaster Intervention of Tel Aviv. In the immediate aftermath of the Molise earthquake an equipe formed by professionals of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, the Cohen-Harris Centre and the Team Emergenza of Telefono Azzurro, planned a mental health intervention on the most affected communities, with particular regard to children and adolescents, in association with "F. Jovine" school in Molise and its teachers, in order to develop a large scale effective treatment programme.

## **Objectives**

ERICE is an initiative promoted by a group of Palestinian, Israeli and Arabic-Israeli specialists, child psychiatrists and psychologists, supported by members of international academic community, who have dealt with children and adolescents well-being and mental health for many years. Guided by the belief that children everywhere are to be cherished and that respect for and protection of children is a shared human value, ERICE works to promote human rights, **joint action, training and interventional projects** focused on enhancing the well-being of children and families **affected by the Palestinian- Israeli conflict**. ERICE brings together child mental health professionals from Israel and Palestine to formulate and accomplish joint projects to enhance the well being of children and families that neighbor one another in this strife-torn region of the world.

ERICE group represents a think tank for the research and the intervention aimed at protecting children and adolescents affected by the devastating effects of war, out from the “logic of competition”. The attention is all focused on children and adolescents who are living in conflicts areas, promoting a preventive and supportive action that protects their mental health, as fundamental element to build a future of peace.

## **The history**

Created by **Foundation Child** and **ICACAPAP** (International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions), the group held the first meeting in Berlin (Italian Embassy) in **2004**. The Congress goal was the definition of the first joint projects among Israeli and Palestinian professionals. To make it possible, the work program foresaw moments of reflection on theoretical and intervention models and experience and background sharing moments: everything with the purpose of supporting an exchange and confrontation atmosphere not only on professional level.

In the second meeting, that took place at Erice (Sicily, Italy) in **2005**, the group adopted the name E.R.I.C.E., not only in honour of the name of the place but also as acronyms of the common goal (Empowerment and Resilience in Children Everywhere), which is promoting the rights of children and bring them back to a normal life through the necessary cares, everywhere they live and apart from their citizenship. From here Foundation Child decided to fund other projects, to extend them, gradually, to all Israeli and Palestinian people.

In **2006** the group had a new meeting in Rome to discuss the first results came out from researches. The picture of the situation was really worrying: researches underlined that children exposed to conflict – Israeli, Palestinian or Arabic-Israeli – presented a severe compromising of their psychological well-being. As demonstrated by Ruth Feldman, expert of the group, even if a relatively low number of children involved in the research had developed a real Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, 70% of Israeli and Palestinian children in pre-scholar age (until 7 years old) presented aggressiveness, sleep disorders, anxiety and alimentary disturb. These are not always recognized, and even if they are individuated they are not adequately treated and become chronicle. In **2007** the group met again in Florence (Italy) during the XIII European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (ESCAP) congress. In that occasion the results of the researches done by ERICE group was presented to the international public of child psychiatrist through a big symposium.

## **Structure**

ERICE work group is by now coordinated by **Esti Galili-Weisstub**, (M.D., Hadassah University) **Mustafa Qossqosi**, (Ph.D., Institute of Psychotherapy) and **Hazem Ashour**, (M.D., Ramallah Mental Health Centre). It's affiliated to several important organizations and Israeli/Palestinian Universities. Among them: **Al-Quds University, Hebrew University, Bar-Ilan University, University of Birzeit, Hadassah University. Foundation Child** and **Yale University** carry out a role of coordination, support and scientific supervision.

## **Activities**

At the moment ERICE group is working on an emergency project aimed at an intervention to help children and families affected by the last conflict in Gaza.

Since its foundation, ERICE has organized several International and Regional Meetings that have promoted a profitable exchange and dialogue, unique in its type. This has allowed participants to share reflections and good practices through presentations and work shops. At present, six pilot projects have been funded:

- Assessing Post-Traumatic Distress in Infant and Young Children: A Multi-Dimensional Approach (Ruth Feldman, Eyad Hallack, Miri Keren);
- Children in War: A Look at the Inner World of Palestinian and Israeli Children via their Dreams (Shafiq Masalha, Esti Galili);
- The Development of an Evidence Guided Approach to Child Mental Health in Arab Populations in Palestine and Israel (Eyad Hallak, Sami Hamdan, Orit Krispin, Alan Apter);
- An Evaluation of Special Education Programs for Palestinian and Israeli Children (Viveca Hazboun, Nadia Barakat);
- Pilot Surveillance of PTSD among Children in Israel and the Palestinian Authority (Omaira and Morshid Farhat, Itamar Lurie, Mustafa Qossoqsi, Hazem Ashour);
- Enhancing the Psychosocial Health and Empowering the School Age Children in Gaza (Fadel Abu Hain, Jabr Abu Naja).

Each of these projects shows promise, but none are fully funded. With additional donations several of the ERICE projects can be expanded to have a dramatic impact on the lives of a large number of Israeli and Palestinian children.

The work of ERICE has been facilitated by two external advisors: **James F. Leckman**, M.D., Child Study Center Yale University; and **Ernesto Caffo**, M.D., the current President of Foundation Child. These advisors are responsible for the external review of all project proposals based on the following criteria: (1) the likelihood of a positive impact for Palestinian and Israeli children; (2) a joint effort involving both Israeli and Palestinian professionals; (3) feasibility; (4) evidence of capacity building; (5) a commitment to continuity of care; (6) evidence of loving kindness and good intentions; and (7) the likelihood that no harm will occur.

