

YouthLab

D2.2 NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

DCI Italy



YouthLab



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Rapid evaluation report Needs assessment professionals – YouthLab Europe

Introduction

This report is the result of the needs assessment survey carried out in preparation of the YouthLab Europe project, coordinated by Young in Prison, with the participation of the University of Leiden, Defence for Children International – Italy and Defence for Children International – Belgium.

The questionnaire for the assessment of professionals' training needs was developed by the University of Leiden and subsequently adapted and translated in Italian. In particular, following an exchange undertaken with one of the Directors at the Department of Juvenile and Community Justice, Italian Ministry of Justice, we added one choice to item 5, item 6 and we include a new item (11).

Considering the very difficult situation in which juvenile justice staff found themselves during the COVID-19 lockdown, including their difficulties in reaching and connecting with young people involved in the criminal proceedings, we decided to add these new elements related with the use of new technologies in the questionnaire. In fact, in Italy many professionals face difficulties in using such technologies while children and adolescents, on the contrary, handle such tools normally and with familiarity.

The online questionnaire was distributed to 24 persons among the following categories of professionals:

- Magistrates (either juvenile judges or juvenile prosecutors¹)
- Honorary Judges, who work in Juvenile Courts as professional experts in socio-educational issues like pedagogists, psychologists, criminologists, educators
- Youth lawyers
- Social workers
- Juvenile justice staff

We finally received a total of 17 full responses.

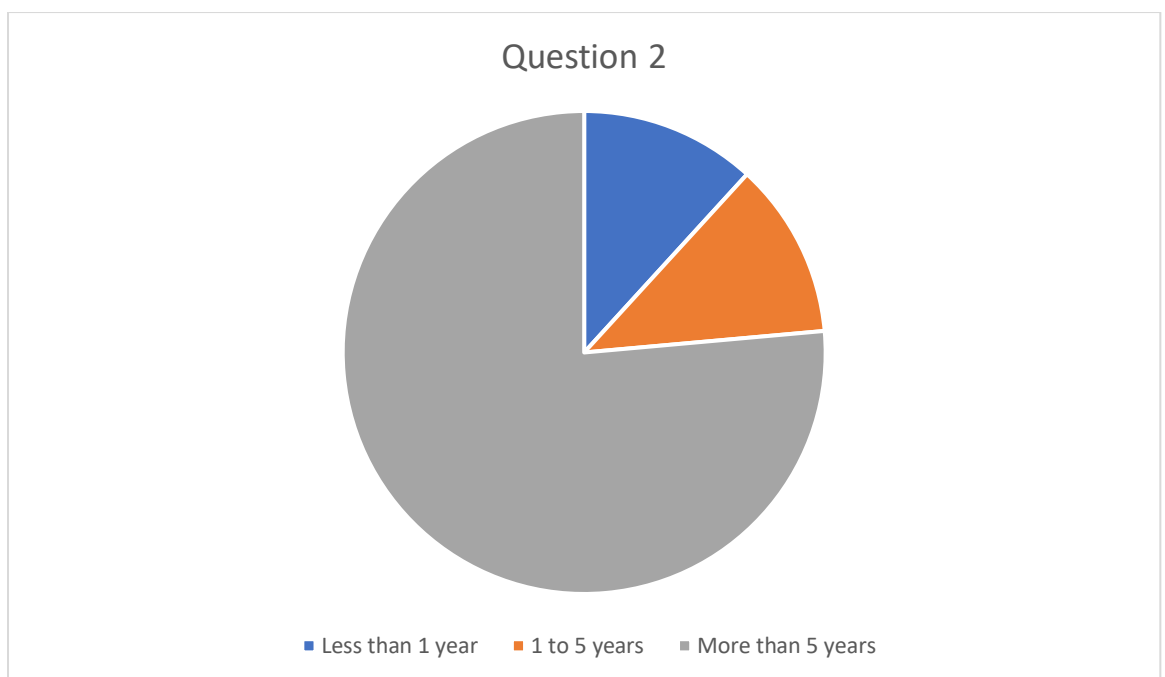
¹ In Italy public prosecutors and judges are part of the same category (magistrates), they can assume both roles in different territories and periods of time.

Results

The following sections report the results of the questionnaire:

1. What is your profession?
 - Judge (2 replies)
 - Honorary judge (2 replies including 1 person who defined herself as psychologist but she has worked for many years as honorary judge)
 - Prosecutor (none, however we know that at least 1 person that defined herself as judge was for long time juvenile prosecutor)
 - Youth Lawyer (5 replies)
 - Social worker (4 replies)
 - Staff of juvenile justice institution (4 replies, among these professionals there are 1 detention centre director, 1 educator, 1 penitentiary staff, 1 criminal mediator)
 - Penitentiary police officer (none)

2. For how long have you been working in the juvenile justice system?
 - Less than one year: 11,8% of the respondents
 - One to five years: 11,8% of the respondents
 - More than five years: 76,5% of the respondents



3. Which part of your work is devoted to youth (minors below the age of 18 and young adults until 24)?

More than the half of the respondents devote 100% of their work to young people. Among them we can find 2 Judges, social workers, the Director of a juvenile prison, a criminal mediator, an educator and a penitentiary worker. 11,8% devote 75% of their time, and these are all lawyers. One psychologist

declares to dedicate half of his/her time while another 11,8% devotes a 11,8% of their work time to young people, namely a lawyer and a honorary judge.

- 100%: 58,8% of the respondents
- 75%: 11,8%
- 50%: 5,9%
- 25%: 11,8%
- Other, please specify: 11,8%

4. How often do you attend trainings related to working in the juvenile justice system?

The majority of the respondents attend to trainings related to working in the juvenile justice system yearly. Two social assistants, the Director of a juvenile prison and a penitentiary worker attend such trainings less than once a year. Among those who attend yearly we find judges, a lawyer, a psychologist, honorary judge and a social worker. Those who attend every 6 months are a judge, social workers and educator. Lastly, the one who attends such trainings more frequently is the criminal mediator.

- Sometimes, not every year 29,4%
- Yearly: 35,3%
- Every 6 months 23,5%
- Every month 11,8%

5. Which of the following elements is part of the training curriculum that already exists for your profession? (more than one box can be ticked)

1. National juvenile justice legislation and jurisprudence (current developments)

All respondents excepting from an educator ticked this box.

2. International and European children's rights law and standards

12 out of 17 respondents ticked this box. The ones who didn't tick belong to the following professions: Psychologist, Judge, Educator, Social worker and penitentiary worker.

3. Child and adolescent development and psychology (theory)

12 out of 17 respondents ticked this box. The ones who didn't tick belong to the following professions: lawyers, judge, penitentiary worker.

4. Pedagogical and communication skills (theory)

8 out of 17 respondents ticked the box. Among those who declare that this subject is part of the training curriculum we can find Honorary judge, social workers, educator, criminal mediator, Director of a juvenile prison, penitentiary worker.

5. Practical skills in communicating and engaging with youth (skills training)

8 out of 17 respondents ticked this box. Among them we can find: honorary judge, social workers, criminal mediator, director of a juvenile prison, penitentiary worker and a lawyer.

6. How to communicate with young involved in criminal proceeding using new technologies

Just 4 out of 17 respondents ticked this box. Among them we can find: a Honorary judge, a lawyer, a social worker and the Director of a juvenile prison.

7. Other, please specify:

- Child victims of violence and trafficking and the problem of child labour in the world (lawyer)
- Role of the honorary judge (psychologist)
- Foreign languages (lawyer)
- Method and techniques of social services, professional ethics and deontology, organisation of social services (social worker)
- Issues related with unaccompanied children and with the complexity of social integration, changes in the young offender's profiles, psychiatric problems, future perspectives for adoption and foster care, criminal mediation, management of conflictual families (judge)
- Re-Education (educator)
- Jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (judge)
- Restorative justice, management of the negative effects of conflicts, systemic approach to family and other (potential) adults of reference (criminal mediator)
- Juvenile criminal law, migration law (lawyer)
- Organisation/management (director of a juvenile prison)
- Inter-agency work in the system of youth services (social worker)
- Good practices, drug use or abuse, unaccompanied children (social worker)
- Prison code (penitentiary worker)
- Protection and implementation of the rights of the child (lawyer)
- Sociology of delinquency (social worker)
- Juvenile delinquency, social participation of children, deontology (lawyer)

Three of the respondents (a honorary judge, a social assistant and the Director of a Juvenile Prison) declared that all of the proposed subjects are part of their training curriculum.

6. How would you rate your knowledge and expertise on the following items: (scale of 1 to 5; Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor)

Number of answers per question:

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
National juvenile justice legislation and jurisprudence	0	0	3	10	4
International and European children's rights	0	2	6	6	3

law and standards					
Child and adolescent development and psychology	0	1	5	10	1
Pedagogical and communication skills	0	2	3	11	1
Practical skills in communicating and engaging with youth	1	3	1	11	1
Understanding the life worlds of youth in conflict with the law	0	1	3	10	3
New technologies to conduct interview and follow on distance the young in conflict with the law	0	6	5	3	3

7. Can you identify three gaps in your knowledge and/or skills in relation to applying child-friendly communication and attitudes?

- Legislation
- Participation
- Distance learning – virtual world – new technologies
- Social and cultural differences
- Capacity of listening and of reading silence – non verbal communication – slang language – learn how to interact with young people who are not very communicative or who adopt a provocative attitude – appropriate language to explain decisions and provisions of the criminal proceeding
- Restorative justice
- Psychological approach

- Inter-agency work

8. Can you identify three needs you have in relation to training, in relation to child-friendly communication and attitudes?

- Active listening, narration, biographies
- Preparation of the young person before hearings
- Languages, music, games
- Distance communication methods and tools
- Communication techniques and theories
- Visual language
- Meaningful communication for young people
- Cyber offences
- Better knowledge on young people's interests, values and cultural references

9. Do you believe that it would be of added value to involve youth as experienced experts in training professionals?

Definitely	10 respondents
Probably	7 respondents
Possibly	0
Probably Not	0
Definitely Not	0

10. Do you believe that it would be of added value to organise multidisciplinary trainings (involving different professions such as lawyers, judges and social workers)?

Definitely	16 respondents
Probably	1 respondent
Possibly	
Probably Not	
Definitely Not	

11. Do you consider an added value the involvement of young persons in helping professionals to understand to communicate with them using new technologies

Definitely	9 respondents
Probably	8 respondents
Possibly	
Probably Not	
Definitely Not	

12. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the issues raised in this survey?

- Very good initiative. The responsabilisation of young people is a first step towards resocialisation. The exchange between different professionals can be very enriching and fruitful.
- According to other experiences, peer education is indeed very effective.
- Multidisciplinary approach and exchange are very important.
- Very useful to know the perspective of young people who have had a criminal experience and see testimonials.
- Better knowledge of new technologies to reduce the gap with the younger generations
- Young people should participate as trainer not individually but within a group of other young trainers

13. If you would like to be kept informed about this project, please fill in your e-mail address*:

*Your personal details will only be used for the purposes of this project and will not be shared with third parties.