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TEARING DOWN BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION FOR YOUNG, BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC CARERS



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Table of Contents

<u>FOREWORD: FLOOR VAN HOUDT, HEAD OF UNIT FOR YOUTH, VOLUNTEER SOLIDARITY AND TRAINEESHIPS OFFICE EUROPEAN COMMISSION - DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE</u>	6
<u>INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: PROFESSOR THEO GAVRIELIDES</u>	7
<u>COMPARATIVE FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	10
1. <u>Introduction</u>	10
2. <u>The policy context</u>	11
3. <u>Key comparative findings</u>	11
4. <u>Key recommendations</u>	14
<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – GREECE</u>	16
1. <u>Objective and methodology</u>	16
2. <u>Key findings from the research</u>	16
3. <u>Key findings from the face-to-face training</u>	18
4. <u>Key recommendations for national and EU policy, research and practice</u>	20
<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – ITALY</u>	23
1. <u>Key objective and methodology</u>	23
2. <u>Key findings from the research</u>	24
3. <u>Key findings from the field work</u>	24
5. <u>Key recommendations for national and EU policy, research and practice</u>	25
<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - SWEDEN</u>	28
1. <u>Key objectives and methodology</u>	28
2. <u>Key findings from the research</u>	29
3. <u>Key recommendations for national and EU policy, research and practice</u>	30
<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – THE UNITED KINGDOM</u>	33
1. <u>Key objective and methodology</u>	33
2. <u>Findings from the research</u>	34
3. <u>Findings from the implementation</u>	35
4. <u>Recommendations for national and EU policy, research and practice</u>	36
<u>APPENDIX</u>	42

Floor van Houdt

HEAD OF UNIT FOR YOUTH, VOLUNTEER SOLIDARITY AND TRAINEESHIPS OFFICE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION - DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH,
SPORT AND CULTURE

This e-book is important. It draws attention to an extraordinary group of young people – often girls – who grow up while taking care of someone in need, such as a parent or other relative who is disabled, has a chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care, support or supervision. The book underlines more specifically the barriers faced by young carers with a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background (BAME) when accessing employment, education and training.

The evidence brought forward is devastating. Young BAME carers often live socially isolated both as members of ethnic groups or minorities and because of their role as carers, which they generally pursue without any support. While helping those whom they love, their future is jeopardised as they drop out of education and feel compelled to gradually abandon their own dreams and aspirations.

The authors make a strong case for more structural support and mentoring for the young carers, including the provision of alternative learning paths to make up for lost schooling and the validation of the transversal skills and competences that the young carers have acquired and which constitutes a strong – but often hidden – asset for their future.

By supporting the Care2Work (C2W) project coordinated by the IARS International Institute (*UK*) in cooperation with Anziani e non solo (*Italy*), Linnaeus University (*Sweden*) and the Family and Childcare Centre (*Greece*), the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme is playing its role in drawing attention to the plight of the young carers with a minority background.

At the European level, all young people are seen as persons with talents, skills and abilities. Young carers are no exception. They are young people whose potential needs to – and can be – unlocked. With the appropriate support they can be empowered, balance their life between caring and being young, and thus find their way to education, work and a fulfilling personal, social and professional future.

As showcased in this e-book, the EU has a real added value in helping to bring about the necessary changes. Through its programmes, such as the Erasmus+, and the systematic exchanges of policy experiences and good practices, the EU can help to shed light on the situation of young carers, raise awareness and provide inspiration for reforms. **As no young person should undergo the experience of caring for a loved one in isolation, we hope that the “Care2Work” project will ignite the spark so that more evidence will become available to effectively support young people who care.**

Brussels, April 2017

INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Theo Gavrielides

THE IARS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

When you think of a young person, the first image that comes to mind is one of energy, full of potential, hopes, aspirations and, of course, dreams. And this is how it should be. Starting off in life, and independently of their background and circumstances, young people should be supported to reach their potential. However, for some children and young people personal aspirations are mere luxuries. This is particular true for those who grow up taking care of someone in need, whether this is their frail mother, father, sibling or grandmother. How do you put your own career choices above your beloveds' most basic needs? This is especially true when your own culture or just the society within you live expect you to. Where do you find the time and confidence to engage with your peers and be a kid? How can social life be important when every minute in a carer's daily routine counts? How much do we know about these young carers, and what has been done in European society to support them in getting the job or the education they want and need? The truth is that the realities, barriers, obstacles and opportunities of these young people remain under the radar of research, policy and practice.

Therefore, it was a privilege and indeed an honour to have acted as the co-ordinator of [Care2Work](#) (C2W), the EU funded programme that led to the publication of this e-book. The project started in May 2015 and aimed to tackle the barriers faced by young carers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME) when accessing employment, education and training. The project was supported by Erasmus+ (Key Action 2) and was delivered in partnership with three European partners namely [Anziani e Non Solo](#) (Italy), [Linnaeus University](#) (Sweden) and the [Family and Childcare Centre](#) (Greece). The [IARS International Institute](#) was the coordinator for the programme. A dedicated website exists to disseminate these reports and all C2W outputs (<http://www.care2work.org>)

The project could not be more timely for the UK and Europe. It is estimated that there are more than 100 million carers in Europe today. This accounts for about one fifth of the entire European population. The vast majority of them are young people, principally girls. Just in the UK, it is estimated that there over 1.5 million carers below the age of 35. A quarter of them have been carers before the age of 16. In Italy, there are 170,000 young carers and 25,000 (under 17) in Sweden. There are no national statistics on young carers in Greece.

In 2009, the EC General Director of Education and Culture said: "The new EU Strategy for Youth ... will guide both the EU institutions and the member states in pursuing policies to improve the lives of all young people in the coming decade" (Quintin, 2009). Several years later and we are yet to witness noticeable and consistent changes in member states' youth policies and institutional structures. Although there has been a lot of effort and investment from European institutions to orientate in favour of youth policies, these seem to remain weak at national level across Europe. Programmes such as Youth in Action and Erasmus have tried to designate priorities and to organise decision-making. Nevertheless, national youth policies remain

fragmented and poorly funded while the youth sector seems to be in competition with its self and in some member states weaker than never (Gavrielides, 2013).

Putting this challenge in the context of a field that has traditionally been under the radar of research and policy, our partnership was faced with serious challenges. Since the C2W project was inspired and motivated by the priorities of the EU Youth Strategy, from the outset, we were clear that in order to achieve our objectives we had to work in collaboration with both the youth and care sectors. Therefore, our energy focused on bringing together young people and professionals to establish a cross-sector, transnational strategic partnership in order to design and implement innovative practices and come up with a set of accredited, reference documents that would: (a) empower young BAME carers, and (b) increase the capacity of service providers, notably in the areas of integration, equity and inclusion, and discrimination.

At [The IARS International Institute](#) we are committed to producing only evidence-based outputs that are informed by the lived experiences of those we aim to reach. This e-book brings together the evidence from our research as well as the piloting of the training and educational tools that we designed following our evidence gathering. Similarly to the [first e-book](#) that we published as part of C2W (Gavrielides et al, 2016), this publication is written in all the project's participating languages. It is my strong belief that if we are to genuinely progress matters of research and policy in Europe that we must read and write in as many European languages as possible. Hence, I encouraged our partners to research their own native materials and use local languages and contacts when conducting their fieldwork. Writing in local languages also allows the reader to access the information much more easily. Why would a young carer in Sweden, Greece or Italy need to know English to read what has been produced about them? This principle also applied to the face-to-face training material as well as our [e-courses](#).

As this e-book points out, young BAME carers in the EU face additional barriers to education, training and employment. In fact, young carers aged between 16 and 18 years old are twice as likely to be out of education, employment, or training (NEET) than their peers. We also know that young people with an immigration background are 70% more likely to become NEET compared to nationals. Our research also showed that the majority of young carers tend to come from BAME communities. For example, in the UK, young carers are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to be from BAME groups, and are twice as likely to not speak English as their first language. Children and young people are often robbed of their childhood and forced to mature taking on the role of adults and indeed the state. The economic savings that these children and young people make for their governments is considerable. In fact it is estimated that in Europe, the value of unpaid informal care in the community and at home is estimated from 50-90% of the overall cost of formal care provision.

But within this grim picture of barriers and inequality we also found strengths and opportunities. By talking to young BAME carers and educators, we learned that the provision of care helps children young people to develop their character and gain life skills that can also facilitate transition to adulthood. Caring can mean developing practical skills that can lead to nursing and caring professions while we were surprised with the detailed knowledge young carers have of complex medical issues and how to treat them. Even more importantly, this particular group was characterised with unique resilience, maturity, strong character, perseverance and a practical approach to life. Caring can also enhance practical skills in managing money, maintaining a home, providing child care, organising appointments and liaising with professionals.

Our report argues that if managed well, the responsibilities associated with the caring role can indeed empower young people and not cripple them at early stages of their lives. If properly supported and listened to, then the responsibilities of young BAME carers can in fact help them achieve their personal objectives. Through their role, they can develop problem-solving and coping skills and can become independent.

Recognising and valuing these skills while opening avenues through real choices for employment, education and training can help lift some of the most marginalised young people in Europe out of poverty and disadvantage. Our training material can pave the way for awareness raising, education and empowerment of both young carers and professionals. By focusing on this group, I hope that our project can gradually

become a catalyst for cultural change that can be embed within our modern European societies. I truly hope that it will lay the foundations for a ripple effect generating actions through social capital, equality, cultural awareness, education and training.

This e-book and C2W would not have been possible without the dedicated and professional support that I received from the partnership. The e-book is a collective achievement and thus I am particularly grateful to Maria Efthymiou, Eleni Sakellariou and Dr. Antonia Torrens from KMOP in Greece, Licia Boccaletti, Alessandra Manattini, Elena Mattioli from Anziani e non solo in Italy, Peter Hagberg, Dr. Pauline Johansson, Eva Nordqvist, Professor Elizabeth Hanson from Linnaeus University in Sweden and of course my own team at IARS and especially Andriana Ntziadima. Special thanks go to Rita Seneca for designing this e-book and all our online courses as well as all those who gave evidence, the [Youth Advisory Board](#) and the young people and practitioners who took part in the pilots and the training. We are grateful to Erasmus for the financial support as well as the organisations and individuals who donated time and in-kind support.

Dr. Theo Gavrielides, April 2017

Founder & Director, The IARS International Institute

Co-ordinator, Care2Work



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COMPARATIVE FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Theo Gavrielides

THE IARS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

1. Introduction

This is the executive summary of four national reports that were produced as part of the Care2Work EU funded programme (C2W). The reports were produced by the project partners and were written in English, Swedish, Italian and Greek. C2W started in May 2015 and was concluded in April 2017. It aimed to tackle the topic of young BAME carers from across Europe, and the barriers that they face to access employment or further education and training. Focusing on the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Youth Strategy, C2W aimed to foster integration, social equity and inclusion through a two-tier approach i.e. by empowering and involving directly marginalised youth in its delivery, while at the same time increasing the capacity of organisations servicing them. In line with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty to “encourage the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe”, through non-formal learning activities and the development of an evidence-based training programme, C2W aimed to promote innovation, exchange of experience and know-how between different types of organisations providing services to youth with fewer opportunities.

The key objective of all national reports was to report on the local findings from both the research and piloting that took place throughout the C2W life time. Respecting the cultural, societal, financial and institutional differences between the partner countries, each country report and project also adopted side objectives that worked in parallel with the general project objective.

C2W understood “young carers” as children and young people under the age of 30 who provide care for a parent or relative in the community, usually within their own home. They carry out, on a regular basis, significant caring tasks and assume a significant level of responsibility. These would usually be associated with an adult. The person receiving care is often a parent, a sibling, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has a chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care, support or supervision. Young carers are a minority group but their presence in European families is now becoming more visible.

From the outset, it must be pointed out that the term young carers is contested. Often, it is replaced by the term children as next of kin. As this report states, a clear delineation of the concepts is not straightforward, since it can be argued that young carers form part of the overall umbrella term of children as next of kin. This interpretation means that not all next of kin carers carry out personal care activities, which are often included in the definition of a young carer (Becker, 2015).

The term “Black, Asian and minority ethnic” (BAME) was also difficult to define in a consistent manner. For instance, in the Swedish context, the concept was adapted to mean young carers with an ethnic minority or

foreign background. For Greece and Italy, BAME mainly referred to migrant groups.

2. The policy context

In the EU, the provision of community and home-based care is gradually becoming a prominent priority. In 2017, EUROCARERS, the key European network representing informal carers and their organisations, reported that informal carers across the EU provide over 80% of all care. In fact, according to the European Quality of Life Survey, it is estimated that there are more than 100 million carers in Europe today. This accounts for about one fifth of the entire European population. The economic value of unpaid informal care in the community and at home is estimated from 50-90% of the overall cost of formal care provision.

While there has been an acknowledgement of the value and contribution of informal carers, EU institutions and member states have a long way to go before claiming that they are meeting their educational and employment needs and aspirations. For example, according to Eurofound's European Quality of Life Survey, 42% of non-working carers are in the lowest income quartile (compared to 25% of non-carers). 59% of non-working carers have difficulty making ends meet. Informal carers who are in employment often have to give up their job so that they can cope with the demands of caring, while the majority of member states are finding it significantly more difficult to guarantee equality of access to care. Links between health care and long-term social care can be weak while their distinction can be rooted in very real differences. In the majority of members, healthcare is seen as entirely professional, while social care is treated as a key responsibility for family and informal carers. This is particularly true for European Mediterranean societies including Greece and Italy, two of the countries that participated in the C2W.

In the UK, over the last 12 months, there has been a growing interest in the identification and improvement of the service provision for young carers. C2W was no coincidence. For example, in March 2016, the Department of Health announced their plans to set out a new strategy for carers that reflects their lives, health and financial realities while caring others. The plan was followed by a consultation with carers and the broader sector and the C2W partnership responded putting forward our users' recommendations. This followed the implementation of the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 (HM Government, 2014) according to which local authorities have a duty to identify and assess the support needs of young carers. For young carers over 18, the assessment includes identification of a young carer's wishes to work and 'whether the young carer is likely to have needs for support including their transition to further education or training'.

Subsequently, in December 2016, the Children's Commissioner published research, which showed that the majority of local authorities have a long way before they can claim that they even acknowledge young carers as a target group for service provision. Responding to the report, in March 2017, Children's Minister, Edward Timpson announced that the Department for Education plans to develop a cross-government strategy due to be published in the summer of 2017. The new strategy promises to improve identification processes for young people with caring responsibilities and the thus publication of this e-book could not be more timely.

3. Key comparative findings

VISIBILITY, RESEARCH & POLICY

- Despite of being under the radar of research and educational and social justice policies, the number of young carers is not to be underestimated in Europe. Statistics on young BAME carers are absent but

it is estimated that more than 100 million of informal carers exist in Europe today. Just in the UK, it is estimated that there over 1.5 million carers below the age of 35. A quarter of them have being carers before the age of 16 (Parker, 1994). In Italy, there are 170,000 young carers and 25,000 (under 17) in Sweden. There are no national statistics on the young carers in Greece. In the UK, young BAME people are twice as likely to be a young carer.

- There is a higher prevalence of hidden young carers in families from refugee or migrant backgrounds: culturally held attitudes about the shame or stigma associated with having a disability or mental illness and needing care may in turn generate reluctance in young people to disclose their caring status and seek assistance and therefore the negative impact of caring on this target group can be higher.
- There is no legal or policy framework, which focuses on young BAME carers at the EU or the examined national levels (UK, Greece, Italy and Sweden).
- The key reasons for becoming a young BME carer relate to the financial difficulties that their families face and with their inability to access the welfare system. This inability is often associated with their migration status as well as language barriers. In addition, most of them believe that it is a moral obligation to take care of their family members in need.

THE BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

- Young carers were likely to develop 'adultized' behaviours and role reversal meaning that many children and young people miss the chance of enjoying their real age.
- Young BAME carers live socially isolated both as members of ethnic groups or minorities and because of their role as carers. They have fewer possibilities for personal development and employability, although they share the same opportunities with rest young people in Greece. Their educational needs are large, mainly for those people who live away from urban centres, since most of them are primary education graduates and at the same time they are heavily affected by unemployment
- Young carers have a higher likelihood not to be in education, training or employment (NEET) between the critical ages of 16-19.
- BAME young carers are twice as likely not to speak the local language as their first language compared to peers.
- Families from ethnic backgrounds are less likely in general to access services that support people with a disability or mental health problem (Stolk et al 2008, NEDA).
- The field research confirmed that interviewed young carers experienced higher sense of responsibility and maturity compared to other youth of the same age. On the other hand, the same studies examined, showed that many young carers could also express feelings of anxiety, depression, immaturity, behavioral and relational problems in school context as well as with adults.
- The majority of young BAME carers wish to improve their competences as carers, but they do not know where and how to find information. Moreover, many of them do not have the time or the appetite to improve themselves as carers, because of the great psychological burden they bear and the frustration they feel. They rarely ask for psychological support. Young BAME carers live socially isolated both as members of ethnic groups or minorities and because of their role as carers. They have fewer possibilities for personal development and employability. Their educational needs are significant, mainly for those people who live away from urban centres, since most of them are primary education graduates and at the same time, they are heavily affected by unemployment.

- Language and migration are key barriers to young BAME carers' access to employment and to any professional development. Problems are particularly acute for young carers from specific religious minority (e.g. Muslim) and who reside in villages which are inhabited by people of the same religion. The educational level of this group is very low, as they usually drop out of elementary school and work in agricultural works.
- The frustration that the young carers feel and the lack of free time do not allow them to develop their skills or to search for a job, which could improve their living standards as well as their professional perspective and their full integration into society.
- Public services are generally resoundingly absent. Some limited activities implemented by NGOs funded through EU programmes are in place, but are not adequate to cover the increasing needs of young BME carers. Our sample complained about the support received by community social services as well as from their wider social network: they say they are and feel lonely.

THE STRENGTHS & THE OPPORTUNITIES

- Young people mentioned that caring helped them to develop empathy towards other people. Communication skills, negotiation skills, multitasking and perseverance are other skills that were also mentioned by the young people themselves. These skills combined with appropriate support and mentoring could lead young carers into living fulfilling lives, and can potentially counteract negative effects of caring on their well-being in the long term.
- The interviewed young carers were able to identify a number of positive impacts on their personal skills: they perceive themselves as being more sensitive, responsible, mature and self-confident. They also believe to have developed problem solving skills. Ultimately, they feel empowered by this experience.
- The main needs of young BAME carers are summarized as follows:
 - psychological and mental health support
 - communication with their peers
 - targeted financial support
 - flexible and targeted access to education and training
 - connections with employers
 - confidence building and the realisation of their key strengths and skills
- The types of support that were requested by our sample group included:
 - peer-support groups
 - awareness rising activities towards other young person and the general community
 - information and counselling about available services and supports
 - respite care
 - recreational activities to relax and enjoy themselves.

4. Key recommendations

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Within the acknowledged limitations of our project, C2W promoted a positive youth-led and strengths-based model of support for young BAME carers. Improved outcomes for young carers should take into consideration their wishes and their realities at local level. To this end, community initiated activities should be promoted and encouraged. Cross-sectoral cooperation at local level with the active involvement of young carers could be the first step toward the achievement of long-term goals for those young people. Furthermore, cultural awareness training for social care and educational professionals will tackle institutional racism and misconceptions towards young people from BAME communities.

Youth-led awareness raising campaigns and initiatives should also be promoted using local language and networks that have the trust of young BAME carers. These initiatives will improve the awareness of service providers at local level but also tackle stereotyping preventing young carers from exposure to bullying, exclusion and isolation from their peers.

AT THE EUROPEAN AND ERASMUS LEVELS

It is clear that identification and support policies for informal carers and young carers vary significantly across the EU. Assessment systems are not available in all European countries and in most cases, there are failings to capture the real numbers of young carers and therefore provide meaningful support to them. Top down approaches, service fragmentation, lack of information and inability of statutory support services to penetrate communities as well as the lack of cross-sector collaboration are amongst the key contributing factors to this issue.

Adopting a patronising attitude for supporting young BAME carers will likely fail especially if seeing them as “problems”. It seems that adolescents have difficulties in recognizing young carers’ emotional status and, as a consequence, young people find it difficult engaging with them or even asking for help. The C2W workshops seem to be a useful response to this challenge as they are based on the enhancement of positive skills, so that participants don’t need to perceive or define themselves as “in need of help” but – at the same time – they can provide youth with coping skills which have been recognized as useful from all our participants. The workshops about motivation and perception that the young BAME carers took part in was an ‘eye opener’ for them that these strengths could be used in education, training and work. They felt that it was of great importance to meet others in similar situation to their own and with whom they could talk to. It is our conclusion that a pan-European policy is needed that would: (1) encourage the provision to young carers of alternative schooling and make up for lost schooling (b) Enable young carers to be aware of their strengths and transversal (soft) skills that can subsequently be used in education, training and work opportunities.

Young carers is one of the Erasmus target areas where the need for more European exchanges and collaboration is needed. For example, we currently have some EU member states with advanced policies and practices (e.g. the UK and Ireland), others which are in a developmental stage (e.g. Sweden and Holland) and countries from South and Eastern Europe where the topic is unexplored. The EU could therefore play an important role continuing to support strategic partnerships, on this topic. Particular emphasis should be given on projects that aim to further develop the skills and competencies of young carers such as their desire for social entrepreneurship. Indeed, working within a European partnership has been an exceptional added value for all participating countries, especially for Italy and Greece where the topic of young carers is not on the political agenda at all.

Furthermore, the opportunity to learn from other countries and to share knowledge and experiences has

strengthened the capacity of the C2W participating organizations to build on existing practices and to have a wider impact at national level (as demonstrated, for example, by the signing of the above mentioned Memorandum of Understanding).

The role of the EU (through the recommendation of its Council on 2012) has been crucial in leading many countries to the adoption of legislation on recognition of non-formal and informal skills. Furthermore, we know that the professional development of youth workers is one of Erasmus+ priorities. In this context, it would be extremely important to clearly recognize the role that these professionals already perform to support young carers, as well as what the youth sector could do to help this target group, which is normally considered a prerogative of social workers and psychologists. To this end, Erasmus+ can continue to drive the qualification and recognition of these professionals at EU-level.

In our effort to counteract these challenges, C2W built on the intelligence of community based organisations, NGOs', research bodies and that of young people and opened up a dialogue allowing for cross-sector communication, learning, exchange of best practices and innovation in the field of youth. Furthermore, through a series of international meetings, events and digital exchange, C2W created strong strategic partnerships with a range of organisations across Europe and planted the seed for further collaboration and mutual learning that further enabled all organisations involved to expand their capacity, broaden their experiences and improve their approaches of working with young marginalised people.



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Eleni Sakellariou

FAMILY AND CHILDCARE CENTRE (KMOP)

1. Objective and methodology

The Care2Work Erasmus programme was carried out in Greece by KMOP – Family and Childcare Centre. The Greek chapter presents the key findings coming from the research on the topic carried out in Greece as well as from the pilot training activities addressed to both young carers and professionals, which were implemented in a 6-day training event attended by 19 persons and through open online courses. In particular, the findings of the Greek final report resulted as follows:

- a) Primary and secondary research on young carers from ethnic groups and ethnic minorities in Greece were collected through literature review on the topic focusing on resources from the Greek bibliography; in addition, it included field research, i.e. 4 face to face interviews with young carers (two of them coming from African countries, one from Bulgaria and one Greek who belongs to the Muslim minority) and 5 face to face interviews with experts and professionals.
- b) 6-day training workshop for youth workers and young people, attended by 19 persons, were collected through the evaluation questionnaires, which were distributed before and after each training session. These questionnaires were estimating the level of knowledge on each training topic before and after the training; they were exploring participants' expectations from the training and if they were met.

2. Key findings from the research

FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

- According to the review of the Greek literature, the concept of “carer”, in particular that of “informal carer” or “unpaid carer” is associated with the term of “family caregiver” or “family carer” (Triantafillou and Mestheneos, 1993). It refers to those people who provide care or assistance to other family members.
- In Greece, it is very common for family members to undertake the role of the carer, especially because there is the perception that the provision of care is a duty for the Greek families and a feature of the Greek tradition (Tsirmigka, 2015).

- Spouses and children are the family members who undertake the care of persons in need (Triantafyllou and Mestheneos, 1993).

- The one and only officially recognized minority in Greece is the Muslim, which is located in Thrace, in Northern Greece and numbers about 114.000 people (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011). It consists of three ethnic groups, the Turks, the Pomaks and the Roma, each of them has its own traditions and language. In addition, the minority ethnic groups in Greece are consisted of the migrants, their majority of whom landed in Greece in the 1990s and the 2000s. Most of them come from Albania, Bulgaria and Romania and more recent immigrant groups include people from Africa and Asia. Based on that and given that the phenomenon of migration is recent in contemporary Greece, in comparison to other European countries, it is obvious that there are still no increasing needs for care especially to elderly people who are members of migrants' families. Besides, we have to take into account that the majority of migrants came to Greece without their parents and some of them have left their children in their counties. For these reasons, it was difficult to identify data from the Greek bibliography focusing on this particular target group. The fieldwork with young carers and professionals provided some basic data on the topic.

FINDINGS FROM THE FIELDWORK

- According to the fieldwork, the young carers from ethnic minorities and groups are aged from 25 to 35 years. Most of them are women, who are exclusively dedicated to the care of their family members. They are either members of the Greek Muslim minority or economic migrants coming from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Georgia and African countries. Many of the young migrants were born in Greece, as their parents came to the country in the 1990s and there are some migrants who came to Greece in the 2000s. Most of the women carers are married, especially those belonging to the Muslim minority, where it is customary to get married at a young age. As for their educational level, few of them have graduated from schools of secondary or higher education, particularly those coming from the Balkan countries. Most of the young carers are totally unskilled and primary school graduates, mostly those from African countries and the carers of the Muslim minority. As regards their employment status, most of them are unemployed and face many difficulties in finding a job, because of the economic crisis as well as of their low or insufficient specialisation.

- The reasons they undertake the role of carers have to do with the financial difficulties their families face and with their inability to access the welfare system something which is related to the fact that they cannot speak the Greek language. In addition, most of them believe that it is a moral obligation to take care of their family members in need.

- The young carers face many problems and obstacles as regards their role. In particular, they do not have specific knowledge and have never been trained on how to take care of the people in need; even though they may wish to improve their competences as carers, they do not know where and how to find information. The fact that most of them do not know the Greek language is an additional problem. Last, but not least, they face many financial problems, given that the care expenses are very high.

- The young carers live socially isolated both as members of ethnic groups or minorities and because of their role as carers. They have fewer possibilities for personal development and employability, although they share the same opportunities with rest young people in Greece. Their educational needs are large, mainly for those people who live away from urban centres, since most of them are primary education graduates and at the same time they are heavily affected by unemployment. Moreover, few are the young carers who know very well the Greek language, mainly those who were born in Greece. This definitely is a barrier to their access to employment and to any professional development. The problems are even stronger for the young carers who belong to the Muslim minority.

3. Key findings from the face-to-face training

The “Training workshop for youth workers and young people” took place in Athens, on the period from the 14th to 19th of November 2016. The training put special emphasis on cross learning, mobility and cultural awareness, as it brought together youth workers and young people from Greece, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom and provided them the opportunity to learn, train and practice together with one’s peers. In particular, the aim of the training was to:

- raise awareness and increase knowledge among professionals and young people about young BAME carers;
- contribute to the empowerment of the young participants in their role as young carers and to viewing themselves and their skills as an important resource for future employment and/or further education opportunities;
- provide the participants with a deeper insight into how the soft skills can work and what benefits they mean in an educational or working context.

The training materials and contents used were designed taking into account the Care2Work overall objectives as well as the findings of the research on young, black and minority ethnic carers’ barriers and opportunities for employment and education. The participants had the chance to test the training materials through the following sessions:

1ST DAY: INTRODUCTORY SESSION TO THE TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR YOUTH WORKERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE (FACILITATED BY IARS): This session was attended by 18 participants (7 from Greece, 3 from Italy, 4 from Sweden and 4 from the U.K.). The main goal of this session was to get to know each other and familiarize everyone with the Care2Work project.

2ND DAY: CARE2WORK EMPOWERING PROFESSIONALS TRAINING WORKSHOP (FACILITATED BY IARS): This workshop was attended by 19 participants (7 from Greece, 4 from Italy, 4 from Sweden and 4 from the U.K.). The aims of the workshop were i) to create knowledge and raise awareness of the needs and realities of Young Black and Minority Ethnic carers in Greece, Italy, Sweden and the UK; ii) to explore with professionals the soft skills (transferable skills) that young carers develop as a result of their situation. According to the evaluation of the workshop, the participants improved their knowledge and understanding about young BAME carers, as the average score on their knowledge before the workshop was 6.4 and after the workshop was 8.05. The participants found that the soft skills presented (motivation, perception, problem solving, stress management, communication, co-operation, self-confidence and resilience) are very applicable in a workplace, in higher education or other life situation. All of them found that the workshop met their expectations and the overall opinion on the workshop was very good.

3RD DAY: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT & STRESS MANAGEMENT (FACILITATED BY ANZIANI E NON SOLO): In total, 18 persons participated in this session (6 from Greece, 4 from Italy, 4 from Sweden and 4 from the U.K.). The main aim of this workshop was the participants to understand and learn different aspects of the skills “conflict management” and “stress management” and how these skills can be useful in an educational or working context. According to the post evaluation questionnaires, the participants gained some knowledge on the soft skills of conflict management (with a mean score of 8), anger management (with a mean score of 8.1) and stress management (with a mean score of 8.1). Moreover, all participants replied that the workshop met their expectations.

4TH DAY: MOTIVATION (FACILITATED BY SWEDISH FAMILY CARE COMPETENCE CENTRE): This workshop was attended by 17 participants (6 from Greece, 3 from Italy, 4 from Sweden and 4 from the U.K.). The workshop main aim was the participants to understand how motivation could be a useful skill in educational and work situations. The evaluation showed a significant increase in the participants' knowledge on motivation, as the mean score was 8.2, while the counterpart score of the pre-evaluation was 6.2. In addition, participants stated that they consider the motivation skill as a personal strength and the workshop met their expectations.

5TH DAY: TEAMWORK (FACILITATED BY KMOP): The workshop on the skill of teamwork was attended by 17 participants (6 from Greece, 3 from Italy, 4 from Sweden and 4 from the U.K.). This workshop's aim was the participants to understand and learn different aspects of teamwork. According to the evaluation, participants' level of knowledge about teamwork after the workshop, which scored a mean of 9.2, showed an impressive change compared to the pre-evaluation where the mean score was 6.7. All participants agreed that their expectations were met and that the "teamwork" skill can be viewed as a resource for each participant.

6TH DAY: EMPATHY (FACILITATED BY IARS): This was the final day of the training which was attended by 18 participants (7 from Greece, 3 from Italy, 4 from Sweden and 4 from the U.K.). Even though it was scheduled to deliver a training on the empathy soft skill, it was decided to change the agenda and to focus on reflecting what had been covered in the week and on everyone's expectations from the training.

The table below summarizes how the learning objectives of the training were achieved:



OBJECTIVES	MEANS THROUGH WHICH THE OBJECTIVES WERE DELIVERED
<p>Raise awareness and increase knowledge among young people about young BME carers</p>	<p>This was achieved throughout the week. All the presentations, discussions and exercises helped raise awareness among young people about young BME carers.</p>
<p>Contribute to the empowerment of the young participants in their role as young carers and to viewing themselves and their skills as an important resource for future employment and/or further education opportunities</p>	<p>This objective was met in various ways; every day a set of specific soft skills was developed and then activities and questionnaires followed to ensure that the participants had a clear understanding of them. As far as viewing those skills as important for future employment and/or further education opportunities goes, it should be noted that on all days there were discussions regarding the soft skills and their usefulness in those environments.</p>
<p>Provide the participants with a deeper insight into how the soft skills can work and what benefits they mean in an educational or working context</p>	<p>That was greatly achieved on the 2nd day of the training where the facilitator presented all of the skills and asked the participants to divide into groups and come up with the best descriptions they could for each one of them; then they discussed all together about them and how they could best employ them in the educational and working environments</p>



4. Key recommendations for national and EU policy, research and practice

AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Young carers, especially those coming from ethnic groups and ethnic minorities, is a group which has not been studied in depth in Greece. There are almost no data on the young carers and their needs; also there is no legal or policy framework and no support to the carers by the state. Some limited activities implemented by NGOs funded through EU programmes are of course considerable but are not adequate to cover the increasing needs of the young carers in Greece. The “Care2Work” project has been the very first step in providing some basic knowledge on the topic; the project also, through its training programme, offers young carers the chance to better understand and improve the skills that have already developed through their caring. Moreover, the project gave KMOP the chance to expand its knowledge on the topic of the young carers, especially of those who belong to ethnic groups and minorities and to be benefited from the partnership with countries which are very advanced in issues related to young BAME carers. Based on the above mentioned issues as well as on the experience from KMOP participation as a partner organisation in the Care2Work project, the following key recommendations are suggested at national level:

- Development of a specific national strategy for young carers
- Specific educational and counselling/ employment programmes addressed to young carers, organised by both public and private organisations.
- Actions for the utilisation of the skills and competences that the young people have acquired as carers.
- Information about the supporting programmes and creation of informative materials in the languages of the young carers.
- Networking and cooperation among stakeholders, organisations and relevant actors who could support these groups.
- Raising awareness activities about young carers so as to improve their social integration.

AT EU LEVEL

Besides, at an EU level, all partner organisations should participate in similar strategic partnerships, in the frame of the Erasmus+ Programme, in order to expand their knowledge and expertise on the topic; at the same time, they should build on and follow up on the results of the Care2Work project by implementing similar activities addressed to both young and professional carers across Europe. Given that young carers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups is a group which is becoming more visible across Europe and also taking into account the barriers in their access to employment, education and training, Erasmus+ should pay special attention to this group of young people who tend to be disadvantaged due to their cultural differences and the social problems they face.



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GREECE, NOVEMBER 2016 | PARTICIPANT'S REFLECTIONS ON THE C2W EMPOWERING PROFESSIONALS TO WORK WITH BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC YOUNG CARERS

Understanding where we all came from and how different, yet so similar at the very core, are the issues and difficulties each country's BAME face, was enlightening and gave perspective to all of us. Many prosperous and thought-provoking discussions were held throughout the day, which helped each and every one of us broaden our views not only regarding young carers in general, but BAME young carers in particular.

Yiannis Papavasileiou – Psychologist

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ITALY

Licia Boccaletti, Alessandra Manattini,
Elena Mattioli

ANZIANI E NON SOLO SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE

1. Key objective and methodology

The CARE2WORK project in Italy was carried out by Anziani e non solo. Indeed, the shared opinion of all project partners is that – although caring can be a complex and challenging situation, potentially exposing young people to negative impacts on their opportunities for the transition to adulthood – providing care can also be an extraordinary opportunity to grow, mature and develop useful skills. Skills that, if recognized and enhanced, can support young carers in their employability or in their chances to access and complete further education. This Italian report summarizes the results obtained from the implementation of the CARE2WORK project in Italy, linking them with the outcomes of the research activity conducted in the initial phase of the project. For this reason, in the next paragraph we will briefly summarize the contents of the report “I giovani con responsabilità di cura in Italia” issued in January 2016 and we will try to read them in light of the outcomes of the piloting phase. In conclusion, the report highlights the potential impacts of the project and its outcomes on national and European policies and practices to support young carers.

To this end we employed a mixture of methodologies. The literature review carried out for the report “I giovani con responsabilità di cura in Italia” was conducted using Google Scholar, using as key words: disabled siblings, siblings, teenage carers, young carers, young persons with caring responsibilities, children of people with alcohol addiction / addiction to drugs, adultized teenagers. All these words have been searched also in combination with the words migrants and foreigners. We included all articles referring to Italian data while we excluded those referring exclusively to foreign experiences or researches.

The field work described in this report incorporates the field research activities carried on for the writing of the above mentioned report “I giovani con responsabilità di cura in Italia” together with the piloting of the CARE2WORK training courses.

The field research was conducted 6 interviews with 5 girls and 1 boy with caring responsibilities, with a mean age of 24,5 years old. Two of them were Italian, in one case the young person had an Italian father and a mother coming from abroad, while three came from a BME background (although some of them have the Italian nationality).

The testing of the educational materials, as far as the in-class workshops are concerned, has been made in cooperation with the social cooperative Aliante, located in Modena, a service provider working in the field of youth and disadvantaged minors.

The training for professionals involved 20 youth workers employed in different educational services (community-based and semi-residential).

The training for youth involved 12 participants, all beneficiaries of ITINERA, a service targeting adolescents, males and females, Italians and migrants, to support them in case of psico-social disadvantages while keeping them in their own environments (household, school, etc.) The detailed description of how the piloting has been organized can be found under the chapter dedicated to the findings of the field work.

2. Key findings from the research

The research conducted in the first stage of CARE2WORK showed that, according to the (limited) Italian studies, young carers were likely to develop ‘adultized’ behaviors, role reversal and iper-adaptation (Boccaletti L., 2016). The field research confirmed that interviewed young carers experienced higher sense of responsibility and maturity compared to other youth of the same age. On the other hand, the same studies examined, showed that many young carers could also express feelings of anxiety, depression, immaturity, behavioral and relational problems in school context as well as with adults.

In both cases, however, it seems that adolescents have difficulties in recognizing their emotional status and, as a consequence, they have difficulties in asking for support spontaneously (Ibidem, pag.154).

The CARE2WORK workshops seem to be a useful response to this challenge as they are based on the enhancement of positive skills, so that participants don’t need to perceive or define themselves as “in need of help” but – at the same time – they can provide youth with coping skills which have been recognized as useful from all our participants.

Another topic emerging from the initial research and confirmed by our piloting was the role that youth workers and educators can play in this process. Ruffato claims that the feelings of isolation and the lack of someone with whom they can share the experience of having a disabled sibling [concept that we can transfer to any kind of caregiving situation – A/N] represent a void that could be filled through education activities, aiming to prevent emotional and behavioural problems (Ruffato L., 2014 p.47-49). The recognition of the key-role that these professionals could and should play is confirmed by the feedbacks gathered among youth workers who participated to the workshop for professionals.

3. Key findings from the field work

Our interviews with young carers highlighted that all of them complained about the support received by community social services as well as from their wider social network. This finding supports the need for a training targeting professionals, in order to make them more capable to recognize young carers when they meet them as well as to support them when in need.

On the other hand, the interviewed young carers were able to identify a number of positive impacts on their personal skills: they perceive themselves as being more sensitive, responsible, mature and self-confident. This finding supports the background idea of the CARE2WORK project that young carers develop soft skills that have to be recognized and further developed to support their transition to adulthood.

In the piloting of the training courses four workshops were organized. One for professionals and three for young carers.

The workshop for professionals had the goal to raise attention on the problems faced by young carers, especially if BMEs. It is important to mention that this topic has never been raised in Italy, so participants were completely unfamiliar with it. The workshop has been very positively evaluated and all declared that they had improved their knowledge on the topic and they would advise it to colleagues. Indeed the main suggestions for improvement regarded the request for more time and the need to involve other services to be able to network to better support the target group. Considering the goal of the project, it is interesting to mention that according to participants one of the key learning outcome was “to be able to enhance what these young persons do”, meaning that they have recognized them not only as in need of support but also as skills-holder.

The workshops for young carers focused on conflict management, stress management and problem solving. However, during the piloting of the second workshop, one of the participants expressed a need to learn more about anger management. Because this need was shared by the rest of the group, an additional workshop on this topic has been developed and piloted instead of problem solving.

The piloting was conducted involving small groups of participants (between 3 and 5), aged 15-20. All workshops were positively evaluated and actively participated. From the point of view of observers, the key outcomes have been that participants were very familiar with the concept of stress: they were able to describe it precisely the symptoms and the feelings related to stress and the situations reported were clearly linked with care. As mentioned, stress was spontaneously linked with anger and participants requested support with anger management strategies.

USER INVOLVEMENT

One of the principle of CARE2WORK was the importance of making it a user-led project. For this reason, 10 youth have been involved in the research phase as well as in the review and pre-testing of educational tools, to assure their suitability for teen-agers. This was in addition to the standing IARS’ Youth Advisory Board activities.

4. Key recommendations for national and EU policy, research and practice

AT NATIONAL LEVEL

All the activities performed in the framework of CARE2WORK contributed to raise awareness among professionals about young carers and their needs. The necessity to support this target group was made clear by stakeholders and in this context we could say that training of professionals is a pre-requirement to achieve this goal, as they need to acquire skills concerning the recognition of young carers as well as to be able to enhance them. In this context, the CARE2WORK training – especially the e-learning version – could be widely disseminated and be a first level of knowledge shared by a variety of professionals working with youth or their care recipients.

The same group of professionals and stakeholders underlined the need to develop methods and tools to

support young carers: to achieve this goal it would be advisable not to re-invent the wheel and be able to build on existing experiences and resources at EU level: some of them have already been collected within CARE2WORK and they would be a good starting point.

Concerning the recognition of informally acquired skills, it should be mentioned that since 2015 Italy has a national law allowing for the validation and certification of competences, including those acquired informally. In practice, though, the law is still far to be fully operational, especially when we talk about competences developed outside formal settings. In this context it would be particularly important to think about fast-track programmes for the most vulnerable categories (such as young carers) and the tools developed within CARE2WORK could be a starting point for this process.

To this end, it is worth mentioning that thanks to the CARE2WORK project, ANS signed two experimental memorandum of understanding: one with the private employment agency UMANA and the other with the Regional Employment Agency of Sardinia (a public employment service). The twos have accepted to assess the outcomes of the project in order to consider adopting dedicated programmes to support the employability of young carers.

AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

That of young carers is one of the topic where the opportunities offered by European exchanges are more clearly evident: indeed, we currently have some EU member states with advanced policies and practices (such as UK and Ireland), others which are in a developmental stage (i.e. Sweden and Holland) and countries from South and Eastern Europe where the topic is basically unexplored. The EU could therefore play an important role in supporting through its programme, such as Erasmus+, strategic partnerships, on this topic. Indeed, working within an European partnership has been an exceptional added value for a country, like Italy, where the topic of young carers is not on top of the political agenda and where support practices are not consolidated. The opportunity to learn from other countries and to share knowledge and experiences has strengthen the capacity of our organization to build on existing practices and to have a wider impact at national level (as demonstrated, for example, by the signing of the above mentioned Memorandum of Understanding).

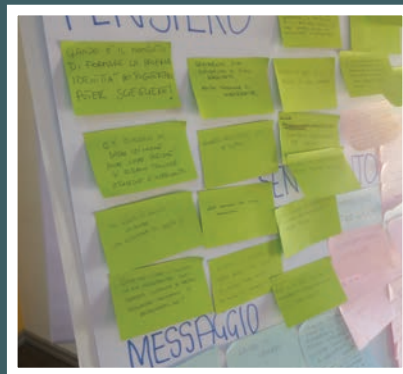
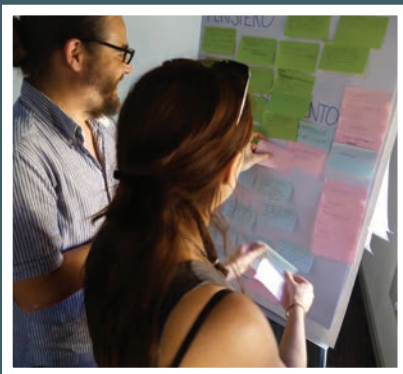
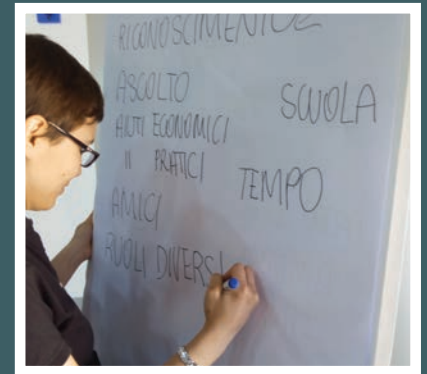
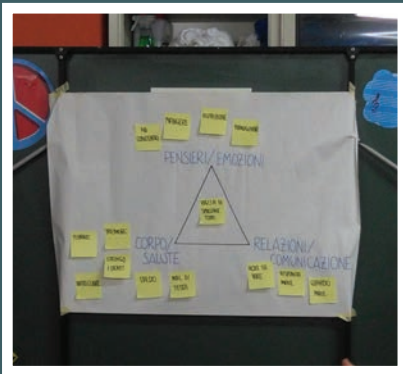
The role of EU (through the recommendation of its Council on 2012) has been crucial to lead many countries to the adoption of legislation on recognition of non-formal and informal skills. However, as mentioned, many countries are still far from reaching the goal. In this framework, we believe that the EU could still play an important role, especially in underlying the need to make these systems concretely accessible to vulnerable youth.

Finally, we know that the professional development of youth workers is one of Erasmus+ priorities. In this context, it would be extremely important to clearly recognize the role that these professionals already perform to support young carers, as well as what the youth sector could do to help this target group, which is normally considered a prerogative of social workers and psychologists. To this end, Erasmus+ can continue to drive the qualification and the recognition of these professionals at EU-level.

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JULY 2016, ITALY | C2W WORKSHOP FOR PROFESSIONALS

The workshop designed for professionals was piloted in Italy with 20 youth workers from the social cooperative Aliante, in Modena (Italy). The session was actively participated by the whole group that gathered professionals working in different services for disadvantaged young persons. The main feedbacks received, together with a general appreciation of the workshop, included a raised awareness on the topic, a stronger capacity to identify young carers when met and a need to develop synergies with other professionals to be able to respond to the numerous needs of young persons with caring responsibilities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SWEDEN

Peter Hagberg, Eva Nordqvist,
Elizabeth Hanson, Pauline Johansson

THE SWEDISH FAMILY CARE COMPETENCE CENTRE (SFCCC), LINNÆUS UNIVERSITY

1. Key objectives and methodology

The Care2Work project in Sweden was carried out by the Swedish Family Care Competence Centre (SFCCC), which is a part of Linnaeus University and is a national centre of excellence in the field of informal (family) care. SFCCC is commissioned by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs via the National Board of Health and Welfare Sweden (www.anhoriga.se). SFCCC acts as expert support to practitioners, decision makers and other stakeholders in the area of children as next of kin. This executive summary, along with the final report in Swedish reports on the findings from our research, our practical results from the workshops, and experiences gained from meetings with the other participating countries. At the end of the reports, this is summarized in propositions for future ERASMUS projects and national areas for improvement.

To this end, initially, we conducted a literature review that focused on research concepts that included children as next of kin/young BAME carers. Subsequently, we contacted more than 35 non-governmental organizations and other authorities in order to gain an overview about the support given to the target group. The next step was contacting young carers and professionals working directly with these groups, and interviews were conducted. The obstacles we encountered here were gatekeepers and lack of accessibility due to the sharp increase in the refugee situation (Nordqvist, Eliasson, & Hanson, 2016).

We have not found any research in Sweden which directly illuminates BAME young carers. Instead we have used what we could find in the research where the target group is indirectly involved along with the studies we conducted ourselves (Nordqvist et al., 2016). This makes it even more important that the lessons learned from the project are used as materials in the design of support to young BAME carers as well as guidance in the knowledge gaps in this field.

During the project, we created and conducted two workshops with three participating young BAME carers in each workshop. The workshop themes were motivation and perception. In addition, we have also created and conducted a workshop for professionals, about young BAME carers' strengths and skills, and five professionals participated. Subsequently, these workshops were converted into interactive online courses to raise awareness about the strengths and skills that can be utilised by young BAME carers in education, training and work. A specially designed web platform (www.care2work.org) has been created by IARS International, aiming to raise awareness of the needs of young carers and to create a meeting place for creative discussions among various stakeholders. The interactive online courses about motivation and perception are available on this web platform along with the courses, about resilience, empathy, teamwork, communication, and stress and conflict management, created by our partners in United Kingdom, Italy and Greece.

2. Key findings from the research

In Sweden, young carers can be described as a hidden population, because the subject has never been up for public discussion (Nordenfors, Melander, & Daneback, 2014; Näsman & Alexanderson, 2015). This is reflected in Swedish legislation that provides adult carers with the right to an assessment of their needs for support and relief (Nordenfors et al., 2014; SFS, 2001:453) but not children under 18 years (Regeringens proposition, 2008/09:82). Instead, it is assumed that they do not carry out caring activities, despite the fact that about seven percent of children and young people (under 17) in our country are young carers, and many of these young carers tend to come from BAME backgrounds (Nordenfors et al., 2014).

The SFCCC pursues development of knowledge about children as next of kin on behalf of the National Board of Health and Welfare Sweden. Some of these children are also young carers. Being a young carer involves taking a significant responsibility to support/care for a relative who is disabled, has a chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition (Becker, 2000, 2015; Nordenfors et al., 2014). The support/care performed by young carers can be in the form of housework, physical care, taking care of siblings and financial contributions. These young people often experience educational problems (Becker, 2015; Becker & Leu, 2014; Nordenfors et al., 2014) and limitations being able to have paid work due to their caring responsibilities (Becker & Leu, 2014). However, despite this through caring, young carers often develop a set of strengths and skills that help them to become more resilient so that they can develop problem-solving abilities and become more independent (Aldridge & Becker, 2003; Becker, 2015; Nordenfors et al., 2014). It can be argued that in the long term such transversal skills will help them to access education and training or secure employment. Thus, the overall aim of the Care2Work project is to explore how training support for young BAME carers (aged 15-29) can be designed so that they become more aware of their strengths and skills, and how these skills can be used in education, training and work. In addition, during the project, a targeted mapping of existing activities, educational and support functions that directly or indirectly are addressed to the target group has been completed.

A major challenge is that young BAME carers are difficult to reach with targeted support. Creating targeted support to newly arrived parents with children who have already been living in Sweden can be a way to facilitate access to young carers. Presence of a supportive network and family relationships is one of the most important factors for young carers' opportunities to emotional and practical relief. In families who fled to Sweden, grandparents or other important people in the network are not always available. The children that quickly learn the language and culture risk a greater caring role in the family. In this situation, it is even more important to have supportive professional relationships. Practical and emotional support can reduce the feeling of being responsible for the family's well-being. The social structure systems in Sweden are based on children and young people being in school (compulsory schooling) and those able to work should work. People in need of care receive it from society. Opportunities to pay for your own or relative's care is limited, while most of the care is subsidized by the State.

Those who belong to a family that have lived in Sweden for generations are often well aware of how the welfare state is supposed to work, and where to turn to when in need of care. In contrast, those whose main experience is from another system will act in a different way. This is part of the explanation as to why there are currently no formal supportive systems or strategic partnerships around Swedish young carers with BAME background. The legislation and the welfare system makes the group a hidden population, and no specific supportive systems have been developed.

Throughout the project, we have learned that being a young BAME carer involves risks, but it may also lead to benefits such as increased resilience, motivation, perception and empathy. Some of the young carers develop social and practical skills in teamwork, communication, and stress and conflict management as a result of their situation.

The workshops about motivation and perception that the young BAME carers took part in was an 'eye opener' for them that these strengths could be used in education, training and work. They felt that it was of great importance to meet others in similar situation to their own and with whom they could talk to. They considered that all young carers should have the opportunity to take part in these workshops and get this knowledge, in addition to the opportunities offered by the interactive online courses.

The staff participants who attended the workshop targeted at the professionals all felt that the workshop has given them new perspectives and widened their perspective about young carers - in particular about their strengths and skills, and the benefits of caring. They also considered that they had gained new insights into why it is important to highlight the issue of young carers. The group wanted more information about the situation of young carers in Sweden today.

Working with the Care2work consortium has contributed to our understanding of how the design of the welfare system has a significant role in how people and networks of people act when they get into a situation of being in need of support. Via the Erasmus + funded project, we have gained a better understanding of how other partner countries address the specific issues facing young BAME carers and how they endeavour to provide appropriate support. As previously highlighted, Sweden does not currently have any support systems specifically targeting this group of young carers, thus the project has helped to raise awareness among professionals working with young carers about the specific situation of young BAME carers, and, in particular, the strengths associated with their caring role.

3. Key recommendations for national and EU policy, research and practice

AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

- Children as next of kin and young carers in general and young BAME carers in particular, are groups that need more attention throughout the Swedish welfare system - not only in the health and social services. To give young carers good opportunities and favourable conditions to thrive requires a much greater awareness of their situation among politicians and decision makers in both schools, social services, community planning, labour, post-secondary education, and health care.
- Provide young carers alternative schooling and make up for lost schooling.
- Enable young carers to be aware of their strengths and transversal (soft) skills that can subsequently be used in education, training and work opportunities.
- Sweden needs to move towards a more systemically oriented perspective of welfare in order to provide better support to entire families or entire networks. The current individual focus directs operations against the child's behaviour instead of both behaviour and the context in which the child lives.
- Increased knowledge of the cultural approach and gain a better understanding of it in relation to Swedish legislation.
- To reach young carers in general and young BAME carers in particular, decision makers and politicians at local, regional and national level need better knowledge of caregiving children's situation.
- Youth workers who work with supporting young people can also see and reach out to young carers.

AT THE EU LEVEL

- Our work with Care2Work shows how readily available Information and Communication Technologies (namely, an accessible web platform) can be used to help provide information, education and also support - especially as young people are highly familiar with using mobile technologies, social media etc.
- We recognize that more research and development work is needed in this area to provide more sensitive and innovative forms of support for young carers.
- Our Erasmus project shows the vital role played by school and also further and higher education authorities. It is important to reach out and support professionals working with young carers in all educational settings.

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MAY 2016, SWEDEN | YOUNG CARER WORKSHOP OUTLINES FOR PERCEPTION AND MOTIVATION

Eva Nordqvist and Johanna Miranda Sköld have as representatives of Linnaeus University, Sweden, met five practitioners from three different functions for a workshop on the theme YC, for professionals. Although all participants meet YC in their professional role they expressed that the lecture and the practical exercises were an eye-opener for them. Several of them emphasized that they have previously been aware that the youths take a great responsibility but never imagined that it could be at this extent. The day was much appreciated and gave rise to discussions and plans for further cooperation within the municipality to highlight and strengthen the YC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Andriana Ntziadima

THE IARS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

1. Key objective and methodology

The UK project was implemented in three phases by the IARS International Institute, which also acted as the coordinator for the entire EU partnership. Initially, we examined existing national and international literature to understand the realities and barriers that young carers face in their transition to adulthood. Furthermore, we looked into the UK national policy and legislation framework and service provision. The secondary research was backed up with a small number of semi-structured qualitative interviews with young carers from BAME backgrounds and social care professionals who have experience in working with young BAME groups. Feedback and guidance were also provided by the IARS Independent Youth Advisory Board who worked alongside the research team and supported them with constructive feedback from the outset of the project.

The second phase of the implementation involved a detailed exploration of the skills and competences that young BAME carers gain through their experiences of caring for family members and others. Based on the findings of both the literature review and the fieldwork of the first phase, we developed:

A FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING COURSE FOR PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK WITH BAME YOUNG CARES

The training aimed to increase both understanding and awareness of the needs of young BAME carers in the UK as they seek employment, education and training. It also offered practitioners an insight into the skills and competences that young carers develop as a result of their caring experience and the applicability of those skills in the workplace. The training course was piloted with 32 participants in total in 2 training events that took place in October 2016 and in November 2016 in London, UK and in Athens, Greece respectively.

TWO FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING COURSES FOR YOUNG CARERS | The course for young carers focused on young carers' competences; empathy and resilience, as core skills that young people gain as a result of their caring experience. The course was an empowering tool that embraces the positive impact of caring as a life experience and through practical exercises shows how these skills can be applied at the workplace or other similar environments as life skills. The courses were piloted in two workshops with 5 young carers and 20 young people that took place in November 2016 and March 2017 in London.

Following the completion of the pilot phase of the face to face training, we developed 2 online courses

for practitioners and young carers. The content of the online training incorporated the feedback of the participants that we received during the delivery phase.

During the pilot phase of the training, we collected a series of qualitative data through observations, questionnaires and on-line survey addressed to project's participants. More specifically;

- **OBSERVATIONS:** Our methodology involved participant's observations where a dedicated member of staff who also actively participated in the activities recorded participants' attitudes towards the training, experiences of both participants and young people.
- **BEFORE AND AFTER QUESTIONNAIRES:** Prior the participation of both the professionals and the young people in the activities participants were issued with questionnaires that included both open and closed questions aimed to gauge their current awareness of BAME young carers. Following the completion of the training participants were issued follow up questionnaires.
- **EVALUATION SURVEY WITH THE PROJECT'S PARTICIPANTS INCLUDING YOUNG PEOPLE AND PROFESSIONALS:** Towards the completion of the project, we developed an online survey that aimed to gain insight into the project's overall impact on the participants.

2. Findings from the research

Building on the work of Becker (2000), we defined "young carer" as "a young person 15-30 whose life is affected significantly by the provision of care, assistance, or support to another household member". The level and the degree of support and responsibility that is assumed by the young person can vary significantly and as a result, the support needs of young carers also vary. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent or other relative who experience chronic illness, physical or sensory impairment, mental health problems or substance/alcohol abuse.

It should be noted here that the current research mainly has a focus on disability, in addition professionals and young people are not in agreement with the use of the term "young carer" as a welfare category. They argue that being "a young carer is a role not an identity" (Gradwell, 1992; Keith and Morris, 1996; Olsen and Parker, 1997; Stables and Smith, 1999; Wates 2001) and they view the use of it as an easy way of labelling that leads to stigmatization and bullying of young people with caring responsibilities.

IDENTIFYING YOUNG CARERS: The 2011 Census shows there are approximately 5.8 million people providing unpaid care in England and Wales, representing just over one tenth of the population. From those, 177,918 are young people aged 5-17 years old, with Wales reporting with the highest proportion of young carers providing unpaid care at 2.6%. Of the young carers in recorded in the UK, 57% were girls and 46% were boys. These numbers do not include young carers who care for parents who experience alcohol or substance misuse. Additionally, although there is no data for the exact numbers of BAME young carers in the UK, research has shown that young people from BAME communities are twice as likely to be young carers (Children's Society). In many cases, young carers cannot be easily identified and their roles remain hidden. Lack of recognition of the child's caring role by the family (Aldridge & Becker, 1994); family's unwillingness to reveal child's caring responsibility for fear that professional intervention that can lead to family separation (Aldridge & Becker, 1994), as well as the perceived stigma associated with caring and illnesses or diseases within the family, especially in relation to mental health problems (Aldridge & Becker, 2003) are amongst the key factors that contribute to the invisibility of young carers.

ROLES OF YOUNG CARERS: Not all children and young people who live in households with one or more ill or disabled family members fall into the category of "young carers" (Dearden and Becker, 2003). There is a continuum of

caring as the level and type of assistance and support required can vary significantly for one case to another. Typically, young carers can offer practical support performing tasks such as cooking, housework and shopping, personal/intimate care such as help with toileting, bathing, dressing, and emotional support such as talking to someone who is distressed. In cases where other children live in the household, young carers may undertake childcare tasks such as preparing meals.

RISK FACTORS: There are various internal and external factors that indicate whether children and young people might undertake caring responsibilities within the household. External factors are related to state welfare provision such as the effectiveness and availability of health and social care systems (Dearden and Becker, 2003). Internal factors are associated with the type of disability or illness of the family member, the type and structure of the family as well as the income and financial resources of the family.

IMPACT OF CARING ON YOUNG CARERS: Caring can have a variety of impacts on the personal development of a young carer and can also compromise their educational attainment or access to employment opportunities. This is often caused by a lack of free time and prioritising of family needs above all else. Research has shown that young carers are twice as likely to fall into the category of *not in education, employment or training*. Other common problems that young carers are facing include a lack of training or knowledge of how to take care of their people in need, limited or lack of access to relevant information in relation to services available to them, lack of psychological support and isolation as a result of the suppression of their own emotional and social needs.

Despite the negative impact of caring on young people, caring can also be a rewarding experience. Young carers mature quickly and gain practical skills that aid independence. During the interviews, young people mentioned that caring helped them to develop empathy towards other people. Communication skills, negotiation skills, multitasking and perseverance are other skills that were also mentioned by the young people themselves. These skills combined with appropriate support and mentoring could lead young carers into living fulfilling lives, and can potentially counteract negative effects of caring on their well-being in the long term.

3. Findings from the implementation

Following the completion of the first research phase of the project, we developed empowerment training for both professionals and young people. The training sessions were delivered to 32 professionals in total with experiences of working with young people in educational or social care settings. Professionals had also experiences in working with young people from BAME communities. Professionals highlighted the importance of the strengths-based approach that was taken by the partnership. Counteracting the negative impact of caring by building on the positive aspects of the experience can be of immense value for young carers when they figure out their employment or career opportunities.

Furthermore, during the workshops discussions focused on the understanding of the special needs of the BAME young carers as those are understood in the wider context of discrimination and racial abuse these young people may face. Many young people from BAME backgrounds have to face an additional set of barriers in their personal and professional development. Service provision has been proven inadequate when dealing with the specific needs of young BAME families. Professionals' misconceptions and stereotypical beliefs towards the BAME community as well as lack of appropriate cultural awareness training can significantly impair the capacity of service providers to identify young carers from those communities and support them effectively toward their transition to employment, education and further training. Shah and Hatton (1999) suggest that stereotypes associated with Black and South Asian Communities can lead professionals to assume that families of such decent can seek support within their own extended family networks. Young BAME carers are also less likely to be receiving practical and financial support with caring and are more likely to miss out

on accessing support, often as a result of lack of advice and information (Carers UK, 2014). Other barriers that can deteriorate young BAME carer's situation compared to white carers include language barriers, immigration status as well as the stigma associated with mental health issues within those communities.

Practitioners involved in the training activities highlighted the need of increased advocacy and awareness campaigns that directly involve BAME communities and aim to improve understanding among professionals and young BAME carers to help tackle stereotyping and discrimination.

4. Recommendations for national and EU policy, research and practice

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

In the UK, there is a growing interest in the identification and improvement of the service provision for young carers. In March 2016, the Department of Health announced their plans to set out a new strategy for carers that reflects their lives, their health and financial concerns and gives them the support they need to live well while caring for a family member or friend. The plan was followed by a consultation with carers and the broader sector including care receivers, business, social workers, NHS staff and other professionals that support and work directly with carers.

The consultation was announced one year after the implementation of the Care Act 2014 (HM Government, 2014) and the Children and Families Act 2014 (HM Government, 2014) according to which local authorities have a duty to identify and assess the support needs of young carers, regardless of the type of support they provide. For young carers over 18, the assessment includes identification of a young carer's wishes to work and 'whether the young carer is likely to have needs for support including their transition to further education or training'.

Despite these positive steps towards the identification and accommodation of the needs of young carers, relatively small progress towards these achievements has been made. A key report published by the Children's Commissioner in December 2016 showed that local authorities have a long way to go in order to reach out to young carers and improve outcomes for them. Responding to the report, Children's Minister, Edward Timpson announced that the Department for Education plans for a development of a cross-government strategy due to be published in the summer of 2017. The new strategy promises to improve identification processes for young people with caring responsibilities.

Within the acknowledged limitations of our study, Care2Work promoted a positive youth-led and strengths-based model of support for young carers. Improved outcomes for young carers should take into consideration their wishes and their realities at local level. To achieve that, community initiated activities should be promoted and encouraged. Cross-sectoral cooperation at local level with the active involvement of young carers could be the first step toward the achievement of long term goals for those young people. Furthermore, cultural awareness training for social care and educational professionals will tackle institutional racism and misconceptions towards young people from BAME communities.

Youth-led awareness raising campaigns and initiatives should be also promoted. These initiatives will improve the awareness of service providers at local level but also they will tackle stereotyping preventing young carers from exposure to bullying, exclusion and isolation from their peers.

AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

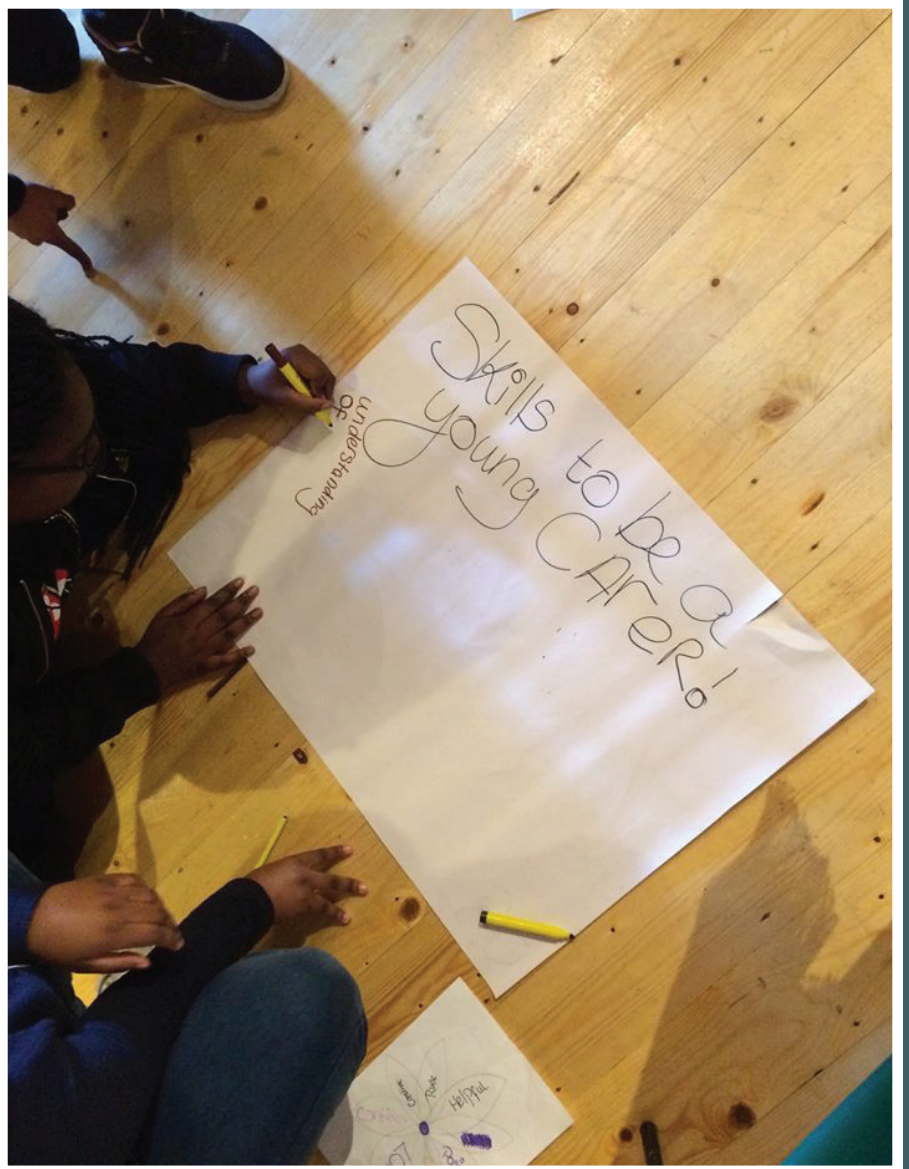
At a European level, there is limited awareness around young carers and their needs. Identification and support policies for informal carers and young carers vary significantly across the EU. Identification and assessment systems are not available in all European countries and in most cases, as mentioned above, there are failing to capture the real numbers of young carers and therefore provide meaningful support to them. Top down approaches, service fragmentation, lack of information and inability of statutory support services to penetrate communities as well as the lack of cross-sector collaboration are amongst the key contributing factors to this issue.

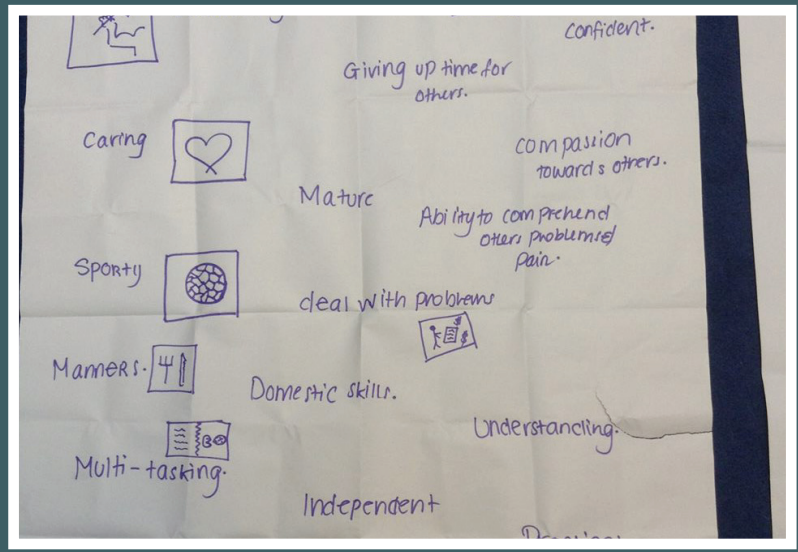
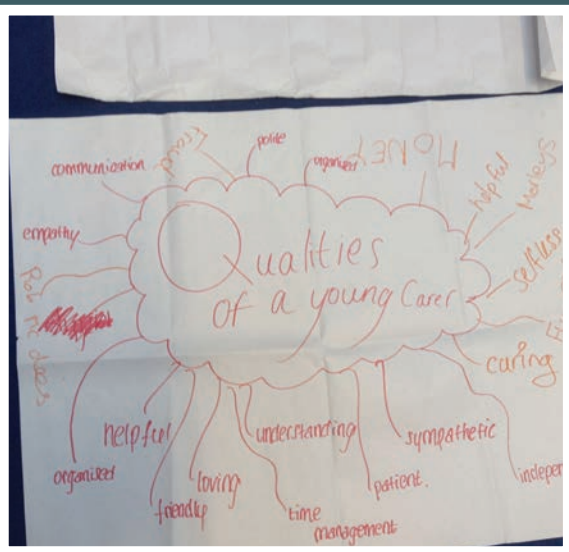
In our effort to counteract these challenges, Care2Work built on the intelligence of community based organisations, NGOs, research bodies and that of young people and opened up a dialogue allowing for cross-sector communication, learning, exchange of best practices and innovation in the field of youth. Furthermore, through a series of international meetings, events and digital exchange, Care2Work created strong strategic partnerships with a range of organisations across Europe and planted the seed for further collaboration and mutual learning that further enabled all organisations involved to expand their capacity, broaden their experiences and improve their approaches of working with young marginalised people.

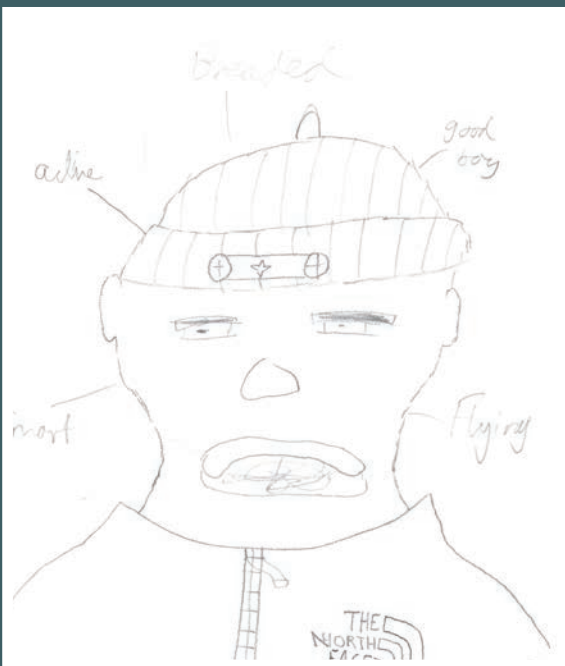
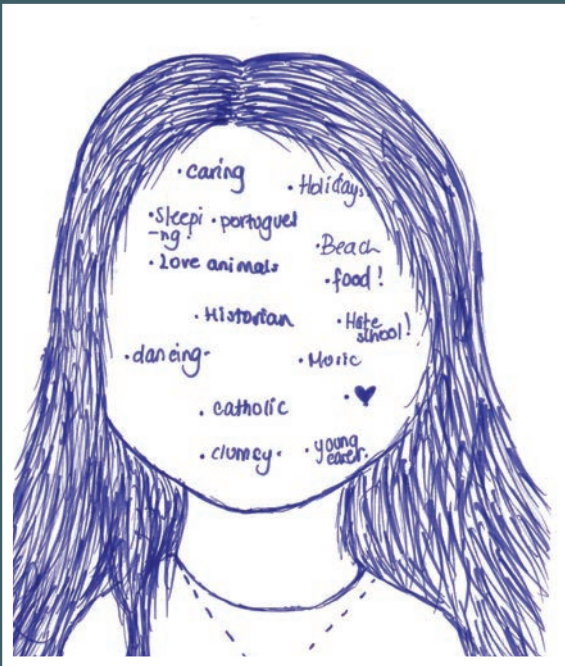


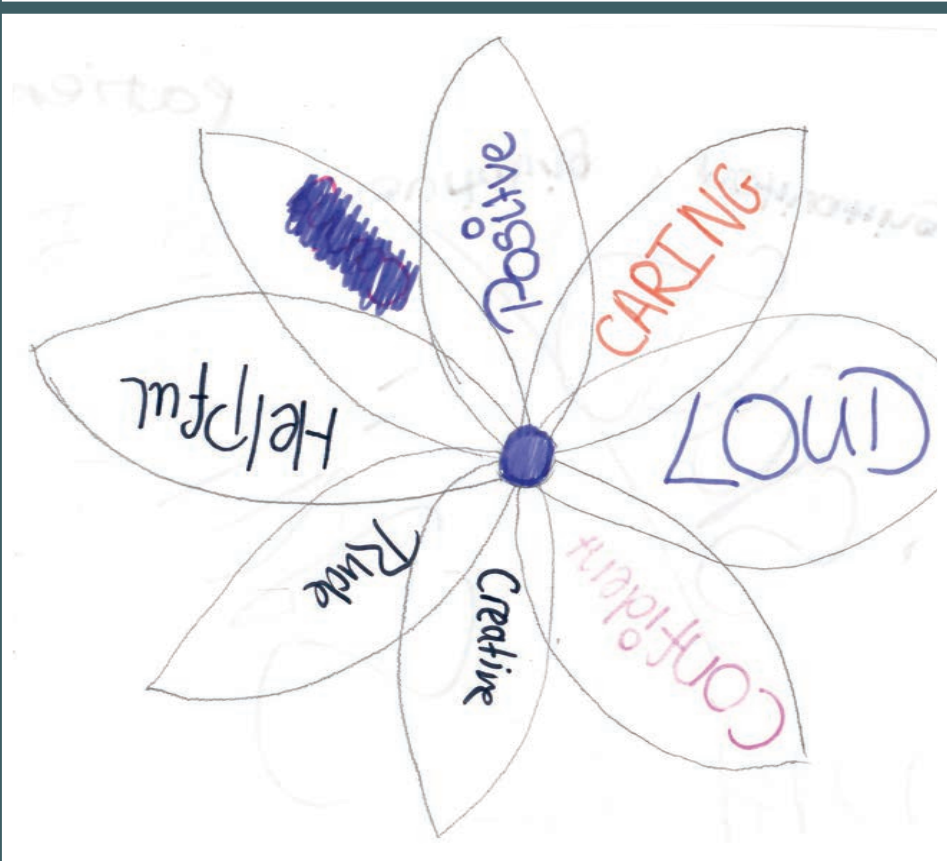
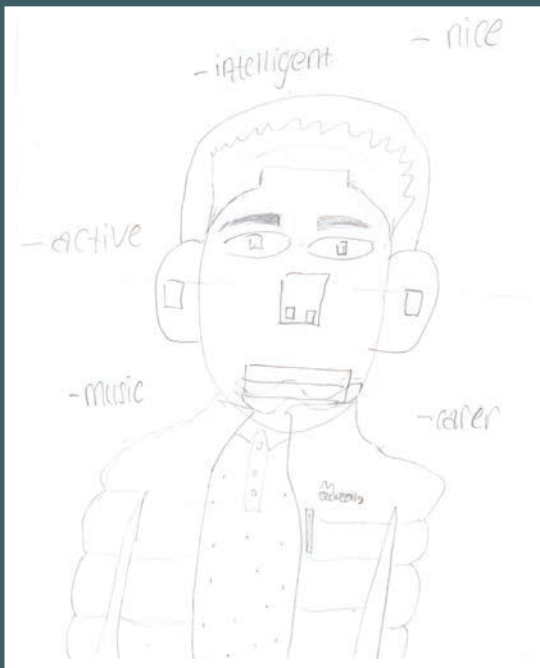
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APPENDIX

CARE2WORK

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The Care2Work partnership has developed a range of accredited online tools for professionals and young people. The content of these courses is built on the findings of in depth youth-led qualitative research with young carers and professionals in four European countries (UK, Sweden, Italy and Greece), conducted in the framework of the two-year Erasmus+ funded Care2Work project.

The e-training courses aim to support both young people and professionals to

- Gain a better understanding and awareness of needs and realities of young BAME carers in the UK and Europe.
- Gain a better understanding of the skills and competences that young carers develop as a result of their caring experience.
- Gain an understanding of the applicability of those skills at workplace.
- Practice learning with realistic case studies, establishing a sense of practical application to what has been learnt.
- Develop a positive thinking approach about young people focusing on their strengths.

The following table includes all the available tools that are freely accessible to both professionals and young people. Should you need more information please contact us at contact@iars.org.uk



Click on the title to visit the e-learning course

COURSE TITLE	TARGET AUDIENCE	LANGUAGES AVAILABLE	ACCREDITATION
"EMPOWERING PROFESSIONALS TO WORK WITH BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) YOUNG CARERS"	Professionals working with young people	English, Swedish, Italian, Greek	Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
"EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) CARERS: EMPATHY IN CARING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT"	Young People	English	Certificate of Completion
EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) CARERS: RESILIENCE IN CARING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT"	Young People	English	Certificate of Completion
EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) CARERS: TEAMWORK IN CARING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT"	Young People	Greek, English	Certificate of Completion
EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) CARERS: COMMUNICATION IN CARING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT"	Young People	Greek, English	Certificate of Completion
EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) CARERS: PERCEPTION IN CARING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT"	Young People	Swedish, English	Certificate of Completion
EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) CARERS: MOTIVATION IN CARING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT"	Young People	Swedish, English	Certificate of Completion
EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) CARERS: ANGER MANAGEMENT IN CARING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT"	Young People	Italian, English	Certificate of Completion
EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) CARERS: STRESS MANAGEMENT IN CARING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT"	Young People	Italian, English	Certificate of Completion
EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) CARERS: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN CARING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT"	Young People	Italian, English	Certificate of Completion

“This book is important. It draws attention to an extraordinary group of young people – often girls – who grow up while taking care of someone in need, such as a parent or other relative who is disabled, has a chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care, support or supervision. The book underlines more specifically the barriers faced by young carers with a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background (BAME) when accessing employment, education and training... The evidence brought forward is devastating... As showcased in this e-book, the EU has a real added value in helping to bring about the necessary changes. Through its programmes, such as the Erasmus+, and the systematic exchanges of policy experiences and good practices, the EU can help to shed light on the situation of young carers, raise awareness and provide inspiration for reforms. As no young person should undergo the experience of caring for a loved one in isolation, we hope that the “Care2Work” project will ignite the spark so that more evidence will become available to effectively support young people who care.”

Floor van Houdt, Head of Unit for Youth, Volunteer Solidarity and Traineeships Office, European Commission - Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

This timely book brings together the research findings and results of a two-year programme that was undertaken in four European countries, the UK, Greece, Italy and Sweden on the social inclusion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) young carers. Following secondary analysis of native sources in Greek, Italian, Swedish and English, the programme completed youth-led primary qualitative research with young carers and providers to identify the barriers that young BAME carers face to employment, education and training. The research also look into the strengths of this group as well as the opportunities and the type of support that they need to tear down these barriers.

The book is published at a critical point in time for Europe. It is estimated that informal carers across the EU provide over 80% of all care accounting for over 100 million. The economic value of unpaid informal care in the community and at home is estimated from 50-90% of the overall cost of formal care provision. While there has been an acknowledgement of the value and contribution of informal carers, EU institutions and member states have a long way to go before claiming that they are meeting their educational and employment needs and aspirations. Young carers aged between 16 and 18 years old are twice as likely to be not in education, employment, or training (NEET) than their peers. We also know that young people with an immigration background are 70% more likely to become NEET compared to nationals. Our research also showed that the majority of young carers tend to come from BAME communities.

In addition to presenting the comparative findings of C2W project, this book includes four chapters each reflecting the current situation in each of the participating countries and written in national languages. It also includes a list of free online courses for young carers and professionals aiming to empower them for addressing the aforementioned barriers. It also includes the piloting results of face-to-face trainings that were carried out with young carers and professionals as well as the training material that were used to empower them.

“The love and sense of duty of young carers is remarkable but they so often pay a price in missed opportunities, poorer health and lower school results. There is also, the emotional cost in missing out on the social life and fun that their classmates enjoy”

Anne Longfield Children’s Commissioner for England

