



PATRON

Project Title:	Patron
Implementing Organisation:	League of Open Men
Geographic Coverage:	Czech Republic, Central Bohemia and Pilsen Regions
Target Group:	young men upbrought in institutional care in the Czech Republic (17-21 years of age)
Project Partner:	Muses for Children (Czech Rep.)
Financial Support:	European Social Fund (Operational Program for Human Resources and Employment; 85 per cent of costs) and the Czech state budget (15 per cent of costs)
Duration of the project:	January 2013 – August 2015 (32 months)
Total Costs of the Project:	4 204 458,- CZK
Costs spent to date:	1 724 024,41 CZK (until 15 January, 2014)

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project "Patron" enhances the capacity of social inclusion of young men (17 - 21 years of age) upbrought in the system of institutional care. Namely, the project increases their capacity to get and keep a job. The main method of social inclusion is provision of individual support to adolescents by so-called "patrons" - adult men with professional background and competence. The model of cooperation based on pairing young and adult men not only compensate the father deficiency in the young men's life, but it also establishes an informal way of learning and support, both within the context of social inclusion. The project is based on expert know-how of two partner NGOs: the League of Open Men (LOM) and the Muses for Children.

1. Background and Justification

The project responds to the alarming situation in the Czech institutional childcare – the Czech Rep. has the largest share of children in institutional care in EU. While the state slowly prepares deinstitutionalization of the surrogate family care system, such policy will not have an impact on young people leaving it now. They are not prepared for the reality of independent life, they lack positive male role models. Half of them commit criminal acts later.

As an organisation targeting men, LOM systematically aims at the issues of men's maturity and civic responsibility. Adult men who sympathise with LOM showed vivid interest in being patrons. Both young men and the patrons are the target group of LOM.

The partner organisation Muses for Children has long-term experience in working with minors placed in institutional care establishments. They identified the need of working directly with young men aged between 17 and 21 years, as an innovative tool for their social inclusion, professional stabilisation and thus prevention of pathological and criminal behaviour at later stages of their lives. Apart from individual support, the project focuses on increasing of financial skills and a systematic institutional support of the target group.

2. Project's Aim

The project's aim is to enhance the social integration of young men upbrought in institutional care establishments in the Czech Republic, in the age between 17 and 21 years. Thus, the project strengthens the prevention of socially pathological effects related to this group, such as unemployment, debts and criminality.

3. Objectives

- A) To create relationship between clients and patrons during the first year of implementation, which will enable – during the second year of implementation – the individual support and preparation of the clients for the independent life;
- B) To help the clients to accept the roles of the employee and the employer, in the framework of the training, and to direct them towards a realistic professional growth; to support their financial skills.

4. Project's Target Group

Young men upbrought in institutional care establishments in the Czech Republic in the age between 17 and 21 years.

5. Project's Implementation – Current Status

The project started in January 2013 and its end is planned in August 2015. The project was financially supported from the European Social Fund and the Czech state budget. The project is implemented in three phases; each phase directly targets 15 clients – boys from institutional care establishments. Each boy is accompanied by one adult patron. The implementing organisation plans a project's follow-up during the next years.

After one year of project's implementation (in January 2014), 12 young men from children's homes in two Czech regions (Central Bohemia and Pilsen Region) are accompanied by trained and professionally coached adult men, especially in socially difficult situations.

During the first year of the project, the following activities planned in the project were implemented:

- 1) Based on individual interviews mapping the motivation and preparedness of the candidates, 12 patrons were selected;
- 2) Patrons were informed about the specific environment of the children's institutional care and trained for the work with the target group;
- 3) Interpersonal relations were created among 12 clients and 12 respective patrons due to group meetings managed in an informal and friendly atmosphere;
- 4) Patrons keep meeting regularly with the clients for individual activities, in order to build a more personal and informal relationship;
- 5) Clients were trained in basic skills of recruiting interviews with an HR manager
- 6) Patrons met several times in group supervision with the expert supervisors of the project, psychologists and they also used individual supervision.

6. Organisation of the Project

The project's implementing organisation is the League of Open Men (LOM), a Czech NGO targeting the quality of men's lives in the Czech Republic. LOM offers possibility to increase the quality of men's lives both personally and institutionally through a systematic support of issues such as gender equality, active fatherhood and work-life balance, participation of men in educational system, men's solidarity and men's health. Professions represented in LOM are: psychologists, therapists, lecturers, consultants and project managers.

The partner organisation Muses for Children has a long-term experience in working with children in institutional care. One of their priorities is a systematic preparation of young men for transition to the independent life.

By the end of the project, 45 men in total will volunteer in the project as patrons. Patrons participate in trainings and group sessions; they are involved in team work and meet the clients – young men currently in institutional care. All the patrons are selected based on thorough interviews with LOM's experts.

7. Overview of the project costs

To date (15 January 2014), the expenses of the project amount to 1 724 024,41 CZK.

The total planned costs of the project are 4 204 458,00 CZK.