

PROJECT PRESENTATION

The CO-Minor-IN/QUEST project focuses on interpreter-mediated interviews with vulnerable victims, suspects and witnesses under the age of 18 (vulnerable for two reasons: age and native language) and how to provide the necessary information, support and protection to this group.

In a first stage the project has concentrated on the questioning of children in the pre-trial phase of criminal cases. This very specific setting was investigated by sharing expertise on how to implement a child-centred approach. This exchange involved a multi-disciplinary team including child support workers, legal actors (lawyers, police officers and examining magistrates) and interpreters.

By means of an international online survey, we undertook a first mapping of the existing needs in the partner countries. In a second stage, we are focusing on particularly vulnerable interviewees (such as traumatised children, children from minority groups or with special needs, and deaf & hard of hearing children) who require the assistance of an interpreter to communicate.

Finally, our findings are presented and disseminated by means of a final conference (13-14 November 2014, Antwerp) and a publication (February 2015). Recommendations are also formulated for all stakeholders and other member states. It is hoped that the dissemination practices above will advance the interdisciplinary exchange of knowledge, expertise and best practices in the field, in both academic and professional domains.



PROJECT PARTNERS



- * University of Leuven (BE)
- * ISIT (FR)
- * Università di Bologna (IT)
- * Heriot-Watt University (UK)
- * Eszter Foundation (HU)
- * Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie(NL)

Visit our project website:

http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/home/english/rg_interpreting_studies/research-projects/co_minor_in_quest/index

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Criminal Justice Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the CO-Minor-IN/QUEST consortium and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.



CO-MINOR-IN/QUEST

Cooperation in interpreter-mediated questioning of MINORS

(JUST/2011/JPEN/AG/2961)



**RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR INTERPRETERS
AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK
WITH CHILDREN**



BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

INTERPRETERS

Request a briefing from the other participants about:

- * the interviewing strategies planned.
- * the case (any particular issues or special needs),

Stress to the other participants that in order to provide high-quality interpreting, you must be able to prepare as in any other profession.

Agree an appropriate seating arrangement with the other professionals.

Agree the interpreting mode and whether to interpret in the first or the third person when addressing the minor.

Disclose any potential difficulties you might have in handling the child's language or the demands of the situation and discuss coping strategies.

Bear in mind that impartiality must be maintained from the moment all parties gather.

OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Request a professional interpreter as soon as you become aware that your language is not the child's first or preferred language.

- * You must not use family members as interpreters.
- * You should check that the interpreter appointed masters the language of the child.

Enable the interpreter to prepare, like any other professional, in order to provide high quality interpreting (e.g. by offering access to relevant documentation).

Brief the interpreter in a separate room about:

- * the case (highlighting any particular issues or special needs),
- * your interviewing strategies.

Agree the interpretation mode, and the strategies for cooperation and interaction.

Agree an appropriate seating arrangement with the interpreter. Ensure that impartiality is maintained from the moment all parties gather.



DURING THE INTERVIEW

INTERPRETERS

Ask to be introduced and for your role to be made clear before the interview starts.

Reflect the child's use of language (e.g. register, word choice, marked non-verbal signals, etc.).

- * Do not take the lead in the communication process.
- * Do not interrupt the child's story.

Channel requests for clarification or repetition through the other professionals, if you need to address the child.

Remain neutral and do not display your emotions or allow your interpreting to be influenced by them

Respect the child and avoid any patronising behaviour.

Do not take initiatives such as adapting the language to the needs of the child. This is the responsibility of the other professionals involved.

Do not fill any 'empty' gaps in the communication, because silence may be a part of the process.

OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Introduce the interpreter and explain the ground rules for communicating together before the actual questioning starts.

Take the lead in the interaction; you are responsible for:

- * adapting the language to the age, maturity and needs of the child,
- * explaining difficult words and technical/legal terminology,
- * asking for clarification if necessary.

Replace the interpreter if they are not the right person for that particular job.



AFTER THE INTERVIEW

INTERPRETERS

Request a debriefing with all the professionals as an opportunity to raise any concerns related specifically to the interpreting.

Do not give your personal opinion, even if you are asked to do so.

Do not retain any documentation or your notes after the interview.

Be aware that you might be affected afterwards: if you find that the effect is prolonged or recurring, ask the institution which employed you or your professional body to facilitate access to counselling.

OTHER PROFESSIONALS

- * Request a debriefing with all the professionals to give the interpreter the opportunity to highlight any issues relating specifically to the interpreting.
- * Do not ask the interpreter to give their personal opinion regarding individuals or on the case.



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