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Innovative School Education Methodologies and  
Tools for Guaranteeing Social Inclusion of Young  
Carers (EDY-CARE)

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# HANDBOOK



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## 2. YOUNG CARERS

Young people who have a caring responsibilities are defined in the literature as young carers (YCs), that is: *“children and young persons under 18 who provide or intend to provide care, assistance or support to another family member. They carry out significant or substantial caring tasks, often on a regular basis, and assume a level of responsibility that would usually be associated with an adult”* (Becker, 2000, p. 378).

Young adult carers are people aged 18-24 who provide or intend to provide care, assistance or support to another family member on an unpaid basis. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent, partner, own child or other relative who is disabled, has a chronic illness/es, mental ill-health or other condition (including substance misuse) connected with a need for care, support or supervision (Becker, 2000). The tasks and level of caring depend on several factors, including the nature of the illness or disability, level and frequency of need for care and the structure and support of other family members. Young carers often take on emotional and/or practical caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult and can include the following activities:

<b>DOMESTIC ACTIVITY</b> e.g. cleaning, cooking, washing dishes or clothes etc.	<b>PERSONAL CARE</b> e.g. helping the person dress and undress, wash and use the bathroom, administering medicine or changing dressings etc.
<b>HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT</b> e.g. shopping, household repairs and lifting heavy objects etc.	<b>EMOTIONAL CARE</b> e.g. keeping an eye on them, providing supervision and taking them out.
<b>FINANCIAL AND PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT</b> e.g. helping to pay the bills, working part-time etc.	<b>SIBLING CARE</b> looking after siblings either alone or with a parent present.
<b>Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities (MACA-YC18)<sup>1</sup></b>	



## NUMBER OF YOUNG CARERS ACROSS EUROPE

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Although there is currently limited data regarding the number of young (adult) carers across Europe, some national statistics and pilot projects have helped to unveil a substantial- and yet largely unknown – population group. United Kingdom, the leading country in this research area, estimated that around 8% of their population 11-18 years old are young carers (Carers Trust, 2015).

The 2011 census for the UK (England and Wales) (Carers Trust, 2011) revealed that there are 177.918 young

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# HANDBOOK



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**THE IMPACT OF CARING ILLUSTRATED WITH REAL LIFE STORIES**

**EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**

**PHYSICAL HEALTH**

**STABLE ENVIRONMENT**

**EDUCATION AND SOCIALISATION**



# HANDBOOK

## 3. IDENTIFICATION

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### HOW TO IDENTIFY A YOUNG CARER IN THE CLASSROOM?

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This is a checklist for teachers to help them to identify possible YCs<sup>3</sup> (Carers Trust, 2017b).

#### DO THESE LOOK FAMILIAR?

There may be many reasons why a young person may fall under the indicators listed below. However, answering yes to all or most of them may indicate that the young person is a young carer. Have you explored or do you have information about the family situation of the kid? Do you know if there is a chance that he/she is caring for someone?

Once you have identified young people who may be young carers, you can use the assessment questionnaire (MACA and the list explanations) to see what kind of responsibilities a young carer has, and which family circumstances accompany such responsibilities.

#### DO YOU KNOW A YOUNG PERSON WHO IS:

- often late or missing days or weeks off school for no reason?
- often tired, anxious or withdrawn?
- having problems socially or with making friends?
- conversely, do they get on well with adults and present themselves as mature for their age?
- a victim of bullying? This is sometimes explicitly linked to a family member
- depressed?
- finding it difficult to concentrate on their work?
- having difficulty in joining in extra-curricular activities or is unable to attend school trips?
- isolated because of their family situation or because they lack social skills with their peers (and yet they are confident with adults?)
- not handing in homework/coursework on time, or completing it late and to a low standard or sudden unexplained drop in attainment?
- anxious or concerned about an ill or disabled relative?

### IMPACT OF CARING ACTIVITIES ON EDUCATION: EDY-CARE ASSESSMENT TOOL

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In order to help teachers and school staff to identify young carers an assessment tool was developed, focusing on the perceived impacts of young carers' caring role on their education.

The EDY-CARE assessment tool is **highly innovative**, since in the countries involved in the partnership there is no evidence of a similar tool in use in current school contexts.

## 4. EUROPEAN GOOD PRACTICES

### 4.1. TOWARDS YOUNG CARERS FRIENDLY SCHOOLS



#### OBJECTIVE

##### UNDERSTAND:

THE SCHOOL IS COMMITTED TO UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS YOUNG CARERS' NEEDS

##### RAISE AWARENESS:

AWARENESS IS RAISED BY SHARING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DISABILITY, ILLNESS AND YCS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL

##### IDENTIFY:

YOUNG CARERS ARE BEING IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE SCHOOL

##### LISTEN:

YCS ARE LISTENED TO, CONSULTED WITH AND GIVEN THE TIME AND SPACE TO TALK IF THEY NEED TO



# HANDBOOK

The co-development professional group is a **development method** for those who believe that **learning from one another can help them to improve** the way they do things. **Individual** and **collective thought and reflection** are reinforced by a structured consultation exercise which focuses on topics which the participants are currently finding problematic (AFCODEV, n/a).

*According to the inventors of the method, co-development groups are “an approach to training that relies on the group and on the interactions between group participants to help achieve the fundamental objective, which is to improve professional practice. The group is a learning community that shares the same goals and agrees on a method: careful study of a situation experienced by a participant, and sharing of practical “know-how,” primarily, as well as theoretical knowledge when needed (Payette & Champagne, 2010, 7).*





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## WHAT IS STILL NEEDED?

- **Staff training** and **raise** awareness among the teachers, school staff and community about young **carers identification** and **their needs**, taking more proactive actions.
- **Integrated approach** with a multi-agency coordination organism at local, regional and national level.
- **More** community, peer and online **support resources** for Young Carers.



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## WHAT IS STILL NEEDED?

- Support family and young carers with [assessment needs](#) and [regular follow up](#).
- Promote a positive image about illness and disability.
- Recognition and champion the school with good practices.
- Monitor regularly the wellbeing of the young carers.
- Legislation (particularly countries in an “awakening” position such as Portugal and Slovenia)



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## EDY CARE TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRIDGES AND INNOVATIVE SUPPORT YOUNG CARERS ECOSYSTEM

European countries are at different stages in awareness and action as regards young carers' needs and preferences (Leu & Becker, 2016). The United Kingdom – from which most of the good practices come from- is classified as “**Advanced**”; Sweden is classified as “**Intermediate**”; Italy is classified as “**Emerging**” countries; Slovenia and Portugal can be positioned as “**Awakening**”. This classification is an evolving one. Key drivers of changes in policies and practices are awareness raising and research.

The cooperation between countries – facilitated by European projects such as Edy-Care - can build bridges of knowledge/expertise, *facilitate and enhance the development, implementation and scaling up of good practices.*

This handbook is a first step which will hopefully help European countries **to move forward in the classification of awareness and responses on young carers**, with potential impact on young carers' quality of life and well-being.



# HANDBOOK

*Obrigado!*

*Thank You!*

*Merci!*

*Hvala!*

*Tack!*

