

Innovative Visitation Programs

Incarcerated Caregiver-Child Contact Practices in Latin
America and the European Union

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Children of Incarcerated Caregivers

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Introduction

Around 1.5 to 1.9 million children in Latin America (Saavedra et al., 2013 p.7) and 800,000 children in the European Union (Farrugia, 2011, p.11) have a parent in prison on any given day. Often referred to as the invisible victims of mass incarceration, these children and their unique plight have only recently garnered international and national attention due to the concerted efforts of a growing number of governmental and non-governmental initiatives. The European Union (EU) has been on the forefront of this movement, implementing significant programs that aim to help families affected by incarceration. Other regions, such as Latin America, are just beginning to implement projects aimed at helping the incarcerated and their families. As such, there is an increasing amount of regional and international activism directed towards this issue from which Children of Incarcerated Caregivers (CIC) could learn, specifically regarding innovative visitation practices. This project provides a preliminary comparative analysis of existing non-governmental and governmental programs in Latin America and the European Union, which are specifically aimed at fostering a healthy relationship between children and their incarcerated caregivers. These include the creation of family-friendly spaces, use of arts and crafts during visitation, and the implementation of extended visitations for special occasions (e.g., Father's Day and Mother's Day).

Research Questions and Contribution

A growing body of scholarship addresses the effects of incarceration on the family relationships, with an ever-increasing emphasis being placed on how the incarceration of a caregiver directly and indirectly affects the health and well-being of children (e.g. Allard & Greene, 2011; Brazzel, Davies & La Vigne, 2008; Poehlmann & Eddy, 2013). Similarly, a significant amount of research within this category assesses the effects of the frequency and type of contact on the caregiver-child relationship (e.g. Dallaire et al., 2010; Foster, 2012; Loper and Clarke, 2013 Poehlmann et al., 2010; Schlafer & Poehlmann, 2010; Trice & Brewster, 2004). Driven largely by researchers in the United States, literature on the contact between incarcerated caregivers and their



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children is in its more nascent stages in the Latin American context with the majority of the studies on this issue published within the last five years (i.e., 2011-2016). During these years, various studies have tangentially discussed contact between incarcerated parents and their children as part of larger national studies on the necessary policy changes required to protect the rights of children (CELIV, 2006; Juanche & Palummo, 2012; Moreno & Zambrano, n.d.; Senatore, 2015; Villarrubia, 2011). However, in Latin America, there is a dearth of studies that focus primarily on parent-child contact during incarceration. In the European context, the majority of the publications on this topic come from the Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) network, which includes guides for parents, recommendations for other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a list of developed best practices for European penitentiary centers, and investigatory studies on mental health problems in individual countries. Despite a wealth of resources in Europe, few of the existing studies in either context adopt a cross-country comparative approach, thus are limited to one national or regional context. This gap guides the report's preliminary comparative analysis of innovative visitation programs in Latin America and the EU.

This investigation looks to other countries to gain knowledge on how governmental and non-governmental organizations have addressed incarcerated caregiver-child contact. In this vein, it develops four lines of inquiry. Focusing on two world regions—Latin America and Europe—this report primarily explores what innovative visitation practices and parent-child contact policies. This query is complemented by a secondary question, which posits how such practices work to overcome the primary institutional barriers to visitation: transport, costs, time, prohibitive prison protocols, traumatic prison environments. In order to assess the efficacy of these programs, this analysis also examined what data has been collected by the aforementioned international organizations to support the implementation of parent-child friendly visitation practices. Finally, this report acts as an avenue for considering how a cross-region analysis of innovative visitation policies might further inform CIC's future organizational endeavors. As such, a broad list of recommendations directed towards developing CIC's international outreach concludes this report.

CIC's mission is to "advance the wellbeing of children of incarcerated caregivers" in Minnesota and throughout the world by advocating for real legal and policy changes ("Children of Incarcerated Caregivers", 2016). This report builds on the international aspect of this mission by providing a working database and preliminary



analysis of the major regional networks and individual non-profits in Latin America and the EU that intersect with CIC's mission. Many of these organizations have already implemented successful programs aimed at improving child visitation. This information can be used to foster future collaborations between CIC, the University of Minnesota, and these organizations. Such collaborations may act as a learning bridge and be beneficial not only for CIC, but also for international organizations seeking additional partnerships and information about Minnesota policies and initiatives pertaining to children of incarcerated parents.

The choice to explore the EU and Latin America is two-fold. First, it draws on the expertise of our team of investigators—Amy Cosimini and Dagmara Franczak. Amy Cosimini is a PhD Candidate at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in Spanish and Portuguese Literature and Cultures, and a PhD minor in Human Rights. Dagmara is currently pursuing a B.A. in International Studies and Russian Studies at Macalester College with a Human Rights concentration. Secondly, it looks at two regions that already have a productive working relationship through the Regional Platform for the Defense of the Rights of Children and Adolescents with Adult Caregivers Deprived of Liberty (Plataforma NNAPES) and Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) regional networks, but that are at uniquely different stages addressing the barriers to visitation and promoting visitation best practices. In addition to this report, a list of all investigated international NGOs, a summary of findings, and a set of recommendations is included that will inform CIC's future endeavors. These components are complemented by an interactive infographic of the regional areas and associated nonprofits that offer CIC the most partnership potential, as well as existing NGOs that could benefit from CIC's expertise.

Methodology

This project adopts intra- and inter-regional comparative approaches to investigating child-friendly visitation practices. Adopting these dual approaches deepens our understanding of how European and Latin American NGOs address this issue on a practical level—i.e., through the implementation of programs and the development of research—while also examining the unique ways in which different nations within one region have organized around this issue.

In order to gather information that drives this descriptive comparative analysis,



this project completed a keyword search on the Google search engine, and an academic database search (i.e., JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Academic Search Premiere) to compile a list of regional networks and individual non-governmental organizations in Europe and Latin America that worked on the issue of the rights of children with incarcerated parents. Once this list was compiled, a detailed review of each organization's programs was carried out using open-access data on their websites, and all relevant social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube).

Overview of Regional Networks

COPE is a network of non-governmental organizations with its 23 members operating in 14 European countries, whose main goal is to advocate for the rights of children of imprisoned parents and to put their needs at the front of political agendas. COPE officially launched in 1993 under the name, European Action Research Committee on Children of Imprisoned Parents (EUROCHIPS) due to the work of Alain Bouregba of Relais Enfants-Parents and the Bernard van Leer Foundation. Since 2013, the network has been receiving funding from the European Commission and has been operating on a larger scale. COPE has been launching yearly awareness campaigns, starting from the campaign theme *Invisible* in 2010 aiming to bring children with imprisoned parents into the media spotlight, through the 2013 theme *Not my Crime, Still my Sentence*. In addition to launching yearly campaign, in 2014 COPE added fundraising to its agenda in order to send out copies of its new "good practice guide", *Children of Imprisoned Parents: European Perspectives on Good Practice* (Ayre, Philbrick & Reiss, 2014). The year after, COPE launched its website and presented a new campaign animation available in five languages (English, French, Dutch, Italian, and Norwegian) entitled *800,000 voices*, capturing many different emotions that the 800,000 children in Europe experience during their parent's imprisonment and this year COPE focused on the use of the Italian Memorandum of Understanding on children with imprisoned parents as a model text to be replicated in other countries across Europe and further beyond.

One of COPE's partner networks is the Latin American and Caribbean regional network, Plataforma NNAPES, which is composed of 10 partner civil society organizations from within the region, including organizations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay. Plataforma NNAPES' existence as a strategic alliance between national and regional organizations is relatively recent, having only published



their first organizational newsletter in December of 2015.

Developed to address the needs of the approximately 2 million children in Latin America and the Caribbean with at least one of their parents deprived of liberty, Plataforma NNAPES works with and for the defense and promotion of the rights of these children who are the invisible victims of mass incarceration. Since 2015, this alliance has primarily dedicated itself to three overarching tasks: 1) increasing visibility for the plight of these children and adolescents, 2) insuring that their specific needs are taken into account on the public policy and level, and finally 3) empowering this population to become protagonists in the defense of their rights (Plataforma NNAPES, 2015a). To this end, this alliance has engaged in a variety of projects. For example, they organize regional workshops where representatives from various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean share their current programs, best practices, and current policy recommendations. Plataforma NNAPES also focuses much of its efforts on reaching out to international human rights leaders and governmental organizations to make them aware of the precarious situation of children of incarcerated caregivers. In this vein, they have frequently met with members from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, as well as distributed the report *Invisibles: ¿Hasta cuándo?* on the effects of parental incarceration on children to various world leaders, such as Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff (Plataforma NNAPES, 2015b; Plataforma NNAPES, 2016b). Members from partner organizations have also presented on this issue at various regional and international conferences, in particular at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights thematic hearing on children of incarcerated caregivers. Finally, they have worked to form strategic partnerships with international organizations and universities, such as Rutgers University's National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated where they are working to translate, print, and distribute informational material on the topic (Plataforma NNAPES, 2016a).

Key Organizations

The EU does not have a unified policy on visit conditions and within each Member State there might be differences on the types of contact allowed depending on the prison. Majority of visitation practices and parent-child contact policies originate from the local NGO initiatives, such as Relais Enfants Parents (France, Belgium), Treffpunkt e. V (Germany), FFP - For Fangers Pårørende (Norway), Bambinisenzasbarre (Italy), KRITS (Finland), NIACRO (Northern Ireland), Bryggan (Sweden), POPS - Providing Support



to Families of Offenders (UK) and Prison Advice and Care Trust (UK).

Shifting focus to the Latin American context, of the 21 countries that compose Central and South America, relatively few have specific public institutions, legislation or protocols directed to addressing the situation of children of incarcerated caregivers and the protection of their rights. Instead, much of this work has been taken up by these nations' third sector--those civil society organizations that have developed initiatives, policies, and projects that provide new potential avenues for addressing this issue on a local, national, and regional scale (Saavedra et al., 2013 p.25). Some of these initiatives are led by the 10 organizations that constitute Plataforma NNAPES--*Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos en Cárceles Federales* (ACiFAD, Argentina), *Amigate--Gurises Unidos* (Uruguay), and *Caminante Proyecto Educativo* (Dominican Republic) (for additional information see Appendix A). Other key non-profit organizations that can be added to this list include Prison Fellowship International, particularly their branches in Costa Rica, Chile, and Nicaragua, *Fundación Entre Todos* (Uruguay), CEPOC (Argentina), CELIV (Argentina) and SERPAJ (Uruguay). Relying heavily on international law, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) and the United Nation's Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (Bangkok Rules, 2010), these organizations in large part research, advocate, and develop policy recommendations that promote the rights of vulnerable communities.

While to some degree all of these organizations categorize the children of incarcerated caregivers as one such vulnerable community, these same organizations offer relatively few programs that directly address contact between children and their incarcerated caregivers. Instead, these organizations tend to follow three lines of support. First, many provide a holistic approach to the well-being of this vulnerable community by providing psychological support, economic assistance, community activities, and educational workshops to these children. Secondly, they work to increase awareness of the severity of this issue in the local, national and international arena. Thirdly, they actively contributed to research and development by designing studies aimed at evaluating the number of children affected by the incarceration of a relative, and the development of protocols and recommendations for best practices. However, as this report presents a landscape of those innovative programs designed to maintain the familial relationship between children and their incarcerated caregivers via various forms of contact (e.g. telephone, video messages, letters, and visitation), the subsequent



sections depict scarcity of such programs in the Latin American context.

Barriers to Incarcerated Caregiver-Child Contact

Emotional Barriers

It is unclear how many children in Europe are impacted by parental incarceration because such information is generally not collected. A COPE project called The Children of Prisoners: Interventions and Mitigations to Strengthen Mental Health (COPING) studied characteristics, vulnerabilities, and resilience of children with a parent in prison in four different European countries: Germany, Romania, Sweden, and the UK. One of their findings showed that “children’s experiences of actually meeting their imprisoned parent did not vary greatly across counties” (Jones et al., 2013, p. 358). Children experienced mixed feelings, ranging from anxiety, fear to excitement and happiness about seeing their parents. As one child who rarely visits their incarcerated parent stated, “There is nothing to do, nothing. What should we do? We just sit and stare...” (P. Scharff-Smith & L. Campbell, 2011, p. 93). This sentiment is echoed by other children who speak about feeling trapped during visits and the emotional turmoil associated with interacting with certain guards (P. Scharff-Smith & L. Campbell, 2011, p. 94). However, of the one-hundred and sixty-three children who participated in interviews across the four mentioned countries during this study, it was discovered that for the majority of children regular contact was usually found to be crucial in maintaining their emotional wellbeing. For children who still found visits unpleasant, letters and telephone contact were usually alternatives for keeping in touch with their parents (Jones et al., 2013, p. 355). Another obstacle that made visits for children unpleasant was the restriction on physical contact during visits. It was especially hard for young children to understand why they could not hug their parents or sit on their laps during visits and at times it created an artificial interaction between families (Jones et al., 2013, p. 60).

Physical Barriers

Given the absence of studies on the implementation of prison and jail regarding contact, identifying existing barriers to caregiver-child contact is challenging. This complexity is further increased when considering that these policies vary from facility to facility on the national level, and that unique national policies may create new barriers, which necessarily influence this study’s attempt to provide a regional



comparison of innovative programs that address said barriers. To attempt to mitigate this disparity, we pulled from a sampling of studies and articles from different nations within Latin America and from regional reports and looked for the most frequently mentioned barriers (CELIV, 2006; Flynn-Schneider & Varga, 2015; Lahore, 2015; Paíz & Reyes, 2014; Saavedra et al., 2013; Techera, Garibotto & Urreta, 2012). Of these studies, some of the most common barriers mentioned were: 1) travel distance to the prison, 2) economic cost of visiting prisons, 3) need for pre-approval and/or specific documentation, 4) difficulties with security protocols--specifically their random and invasive nature, 5) quality of the prison environment--lack of waiting rooms, no water and/or bathrooms, visitations held outside in the elements, 6) limited visitation hours, and 7) emotional stress of visitation. In the cross-country study of the situation of children of incarcerated parents *Invisibles: ¿hasta cuándo?* (2013) coordinated by CWS and Gurises Unidos, one Nicaraguan child offers a telling narrative of her reaction to visiting a Nicaraguan prison:

The things that I like the least, that the visits are disgusting because when we get in line, people cut in front, and the people that are in the front are pushed back in the line, and there are times when children are hit. These sweet kids start to cry and it is so hot inside. Personally, I don't like it because the bathrooms are disgusting. They search everyone to check for drugs, and if one is a woman they put her in a room and they undress her; I don't like the police because they search us as if a child or an old lady really would bring something in. The bathrooms are disgusting because every time you need to urinate other people pass by looking at one because there are no bathroom doors. There are pit toilets and they are left filthy. (personal translation, 2013, p.53)

Experiences such as these are common, adding to the impetus for the creation of innovative programs and spaces that insure that children are able to protect their right to maintain in contact with their incarcerated family members in a way that serves their "best interests" (UNCRC, 1989).

Innovative Programs

Family-friendly spaces

Article 9 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* states that "States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is



contrary to the child's best interests.” Therefore, maintaining family contacts is a priority, and as such, COPE members are carrying out a number of programs with a purpose to support and strengthen family ties. One of the improvements they want to implement is creating better conditions for visits of children with their parents.

In Northern Ireland at HM Prison Maghaberry, families have an opportunity to visit cells of inmates serving life sentences and are taken on a walking tour of the prison, including workshop areas. This option has been found to bring relief to the families, as they were able to visualize the conditions in which their loved ones will spend the rest of their lives (Ayre, Philbrick, & Reiss, 2014, p.92).

COPE members managed to provide child-friendly spaces in their respective countries, for example NEPACS, a charity in northeast England, provided special rooms for young people aged 8-18 at three prisons, where children can play games while waiting for their visit (“Action for Prisoners’ Families”, n.d., p.2). A Norwegian NGO The Organisation for Families and Friends of Prisoners (FFP) established outdoor spaces in two prisons in order to provide a more relaxed atmosphere for families during visits (“MailChimp”, 2014). In Italy, the *Casa di Reclusione di Bollate* offers child-friendly play areas for all children visiting incarcerated fathers and the play-areas are separated depending on the age of a child (6-12 months; 1-3 years; 4-10 years; 11-14 years) (Ayre, Philbrick, & Reiss, 2014, p. 98).

Italian NGO Bambinisenzasbarre offers an excellent example of the ways that prisons can be child-friendly. Bambinisenzasbarre introduced Spazio Giallo (Yellow Space) Reception System in three prisons in Lombardy, where children can “rest, play, draw, speak with children’s workers and wait for the visit with their parent. It is called a “psychological- educational” space” (Ayre, Philbrick & Reiss, 2014, p. 96). Additionally, the Italian NGO implemented a *Trovopapa* (I find my daddy) which by using tools of innovative technologies helps children find the path from the outside of the prison to the prison visit and back outside and reduce any traumatic experiences while visiting the prison (Ayre, Philbrick & Reiss, 2014, p. 95).

Bedford Row Family Project in Limerick, Ireland introduced a prison visitor center offering refreshments and emotional support for visitors. The biggest strength of the visitor center is its staff, as it includes members who have been prisoners themselves or previously had an incarcerated family member. The staff is able to more closely identify the needs and the boundaries of the community affected by the problem, and as



such offer more first-hand advice (Ayre, Phillbrick & Reiss, 2014, p. 52).

Finish Kriminaalihuollon tukisäätiö (KRITS) aims to reduce recidivism and develops and furthers probation and after-care services and supports voluntary work. Their programs range from supporting housing services to having an Ombudsman Office for Offenders. Moreover, as shown below on the images, Finnish prisons must have special visiting rooms for children as of 2015 and physical contact is allowed in these special spaces (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: KRITS' publicity on child-friendly space initiative

Belgian Relais Enfants-Parents has created *trilieux spaces* in prisons for children to interact with their imprisoned parent in during their visit. The *trilieux* includes: a motor space, a calm space, and a creative space (Figure 2, 3 and 4), where children can play and show off their acrobatic skills or relax with their parents on pillows or draw, play board games and musical instruments ("Child-friendly visits for children with imprisoned parents", 2010).

Figure 2: A motor space.



Figure 3: A calm space.



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Figure 4: A creative space

While Belgian REPR created *trilieux spaces*, Swiss REPR created eight welcome centers separate from the main prison buildings that also have volunteers available both before and after a visit if children want to talk about their experiences (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: REPR Welcome centres in Switzerland

The development of child-friendly spaces has been implemented by relatively few Latin American organizations, in part due to overcrowding and poor prison conditions, including the lack of designated visiting areas in many prisons. A recent study carried out by the *Universidad Católica de Uruguay* and the Uruguayan non-profit *Fundación Entre Todos* highlights the barriers to the construction of these spaces, while simultaneously emphasizing their pressing importance:

In the facility there are no appropriate spaces for receiving children; on the



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contrary, the building conditions are averse to movement (concrete tables and benches), playing, family intimacy, and hygiene standards (broken toilets and terrible bathroom conditions), which is corroborated by parents of these children and our own observations. The activities that are available to children are: sharing meals together and ball sports on the patio, both which make it very difficult to establish other modalities of incarcerated caregiver-child contact. (personal translation, Techera, Garibotto & Urreta, 2012, p. 64)

While these casual encounters and make-shift spaces allow for direct contact between incarcerated caregivers and their children, the environment is not conducive to developing any degree of visitation stability for the children. In an informational video created by the Uruguayan organization *Gurises Unidos*, 15-year old Facundo describes this lack of stability and how it affected his decision to visit his incarcerated father.

If there was a good guard on duty, they would let you enter wearing a red hoodie or wearing shorts, like we do now. But if the guard was half-crazy, they wouldn't let you enter with shorts. There were guards who would inspect all of your food and would touch all of it, and others who would glance at it and let you enter...I went 7 months without visiting my father....and I didn't want to go because it depressed me so much. (Canal de gurisesunidos, 2015)

One of the few organizations to address this need for child-friendly spaces: Uruguayan non-profit *Fundación Entre Todos*. In line with one of their central organizational objectives--to foster the improvement of the bonds that work to minimize the negative impact on children of incarcerated caregivers--*Fundación Entre Todos* developed a toy workshop where incarcerated fathers were able to create toys for their children to use during visitation. Forty participants were invited to participate, and 20 fathers completed the workshop, creating a set of toys for their children in the process and later participating in a talk-back about the process. In the future, *Fundación Entre Todos* hopes to open more spaces where children can work with their parents on projects such as these (Fundación Entre Todos, 2016).

Chile's Ministry of Social Development as part of a system of social protection named *Chile Solidario* has developed a program called *Abriendo Caminos*. *Abriendo Caminos* contracts with various non-governmental organizations and public universities to run this program in the country's participating regions. As part of this program, the



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non-profit Galerna with the Ministry of Social Development developed an activity in the *Complejo Penitenciario de Valparaíso* (CPV) called *Visita Protegida* (Protected Visit), which looks to create a child-friendly visit experience for children with an incarcerated loved one. Carried out in the gym of Valparaíso's penitentiary, the program allowed families to share a meal together before participating in a series of guided activities and games. At the end of the event, families received two copies of a family photo--one was given to the incarcerated individual and the other was given to the child to take home (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, July 2015).

The judiciary of the Brazilian state of Goiás implemented a governmental program entitled *Amparando Filhos*, which provides assistance and protection to the children of incarcerated mothers. One of the services provided by this program is humanized visits, which take place every 15 days outside of the typical prison environment. Generally, these visits take place in spaces such as Social Assistance Reference Centers or Municipal Child Education Centers. Currently the program operates in Serranópolis, Anápolis, Iporá, Israleândia and Jataí (Prefeitura de Jataí, 2016).

Workshops/Support Groups

In addition to creating child-friendly spaces, some NGOs run support groups for children, whose parents are imprisoned. They also run some workshops for imprisoned mothers and fathers. Italian *Bambinisenzasbarre* runs support groups for imprisoned mothers and fathers which help reinforce parenting skills and offer individual counselling sessions for parents. Even though, individual and group support is an effective tool in requalifying parents such practices can be costly (Ayre, Phillbrick, & Reiss, 2014, p. 79). Swiss REPR also holds support groups once a month in four prisons for children and provides psychological support and information for children affected by parental incarceration that is also available by telephone and email ("Child-friendly visits for children with imprisoned parents," 2010). Swedish Bryggan, FFP in Norway, SAVN in Denmark, Treffpunkt e.V. in Germany also provide counselling to children whose parents are in prison (Ayre, Phillbrick, & Reiss, 2014, p.53).

Other organizations that work to provide alternative spaces for children to reflect on their relationship with their incarcerated caregivers and create a dialogue with professionals about their visitation experiences include Prison Fellowship International through some of its associated national offices, including Costa Rica and Chile. In Costa



Rica, this space is provided as a central component of their *Semillitas de Amor* program (Confraternidad Carcelaria Costa Rica, 2016b). A similar program has also been developed by Nicaragua's INPHRU. As reported by NNAPES in their newsletter, INPRHU formed the first community group of children of incarcerated parents. Initiated by children and youth in the community, this initiative "seeks to create a safe space where young people can express their thoughts and feelings on how the incarceration of a parent affects them and support them in strengthening the relationship with their detained relatives" (Plataforma NNAPES, 2016b).

Video

HMP Magilligan Prison in Northern Ireland allowed access to Skype for prisoners in order to help them maintain contact with their families. Such initiatives:

could mark a key new policy development and could allow for increased contact between imprisoned parents and their children, where appropriate, at a reduced cost and with a greater degree of interaction between children and parents than is provided by traditional telephone calls. ("Skype calls introduced for prisoners at HMP Magilligan, Northern Ireland", 2016).

Considering this recent adoption of video-conferencing in other programs, the Spanish organization *Niños sin barreras* is implementing a pilot program using this technology to maintain contact between incarcerated parents and their children who do not live near the prison facilities where their parents are housed. Currently in development, this program may prove particularly useful in the Spanish case, as approximately 53% of all prisoners held in Spanish prisons are foreigners (Niños sin barreras, 2016a).

The preliminary research done on Latin America showed only one specific program geared towards developing video visitation technology was found. In the Argentine prison *Alcaidía UR1* in Santa Rosa, a project run by Nicolás Posadas, professor of visual arts in collaboration with with the penal institution's staff has begun using videos to record parents talking about their daily lives and activities. This information is then shared with family members outside of prison. With a group of 70 prisoners, 10 videos have already been made (RC, 2014). In addition to this project, the option of video visitation has been recommended by several reports from the region including UNICEF and Colectivo Artesana's sponsored report on the prison situation in Guatemala: *Sistema de protección para las hijas e hijos de las mujeres privadas de libertad en*



Guatemala (Paíz & Reyes, 2014).

Arts programs

COPE NGOs do not only use technology in order to help maintain family ties, but also facilitate art projects at the visitation facilities in order to help teach inmates to make things for their children. In England and Wales, Storybook Dads (see Figure 6) supports and accompanies imprisoned fathers throughout the whole process; from choosing a book to read, recording it, editing it with sound effects and sending it off to their children (“What we do: The Storybook Dads Difference”, n.d.).

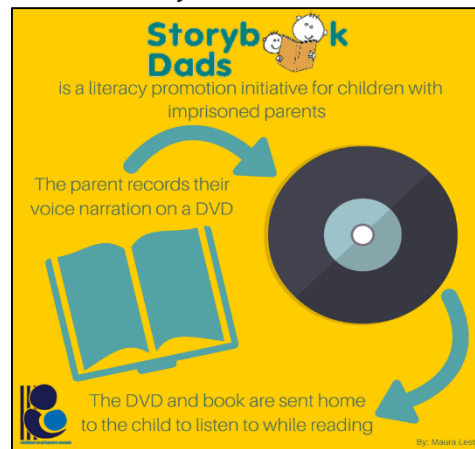


Figure 6: Storybook Dads Description

Polish Slawek Foundation also introduced a similar program to AS Warszawa - Bialoleka called *Read to Me Mum, Read to Me Dad*. This program provides prisoners with an opportunity to record a CD with stories for their children that are delivered to the prisoner's children (“Program ‘Poczyta Mi’”, n.d.).

Another initiative involving art has been developed by the Catholic University of Milan. The project is called *Memory Box* and it aims to help keep the child and parent in contact. Children after every visit can place in the box a drawing or a short writing reflecting upon visiting their parents (Robertson, 2012.)

Music is another way that NGOs try to engage children in while visiting their parents. COPE member Families Outside staff works closely with Dads Rock, a playgroup for Dads, Granddads and their children/grandchildren, who organize music workshops with approximately 10/11 families every week. Dads Rock's aim is to engage fathers positively with their children through age appropriate activities and songs/music (“Dads Rock: Us/Aims/Vision”, n.d.).



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Similar creative programs have been developed in Latin America with some aimed at allowing incarcerated parents to explore their experience in prison and their relationship with their children through artistic outlets. Other artistic programs are more directly aimed at developing their children's creative means of expression. The previously mentioned COPE program Story Book Dads, has its counterpart in Prison Fellowship International's Costa Rican branch and their new program, *Proyecto Cuéntame*. This project allows children under the age of 10 to digitally read a story with their incarcerated mothers via the recordings that Prison Fellowship Costa Rica collects of their mother's reading children's stories (Confraternidad Carcelaria Costa Rica, 2016a).

This degree of artistic exchange is also developed in Jamaica through the organization Students Expressing Truth (S.E.T). Described as an "inmate-driven transformative program that grew out of an inmate literacy program" it seeks to allow inmates to become protagonists in their own rehabilitation and actively contribute to their community (S.E.T., 2007). Implemented at Tower St, Ft. Augusta and South Camp Adult Correctional Centres, S.E.T has a program called Inmate Diaries. Published on an open-access blog and occasionally read on the prison's radio station, the poems, stories and letters developed as part of Inmate Diaries allow prisoners to share their feelings and experiences with their family members and the community at large (S.E.T, 2007).

The previously discussed Chilean government initiative *Abriendo Caminos* provides a similar artistic outlet for vulnerable children. Partnering with this initiative on three occasions, the Chilean non-profit CreArte uses art as a transformative tool to work through their difficult family situations and develop their personal strength. From 2012-2014, they led the program *Crear para Creer* in Recoleta and Conchalí. In 2015, they developed the program *Fortalezas para Avanzar*, and are currently developing the program *Fortaleciendo la Resiliencia* from 2015-2017 in Recoleta, Huechuraba and Independencia. These programs carry out artistic workshops that last throughout the school year that focus on self-expression through the construction of murals, pieces of art, crafts, poetry etc., while simultaneously exposing these children to the artistic community through artistic performances of invited guests (Corporación CreArte, 2016).

Another artistic project developed by the same governmental initiative is the yearly literary and artistic competition where students get to compete to have their



works presented in an Art Show and published in a book. In 2015, the theme of this competition was *Historias de Camino* and children got to compete in various categories, such as drawings, graffiti, comics, and illustrated stories. Prior to this competition, these children receive workshops on these artistic forms of expression from the initiative's diverse regional partners (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, June 2016).

Ambassadors

In addition to creating child-friendly spaces, some NGOs saw introducing Children's Ambassadors as another factor that would make children feel more comfortable while visiting their parents in prison. German Service Treffpunkt arranged for professionals from social service agencies to accompany several children at the same time to see their parents (Ayre, Phillbrick & Reiss, 2014, p. 103). French Relais Enfants Parents (REP), on the other hand, introduced volunteers accompanying children during visits in prison, who work side-by-side with psychologists, social workers, and other professionals. REP established a stable relationship between a child and a volunteer. Thus, whenever possible the child is escorted by the same volunteer, who picks the child up from home, travels with them to and from the prison, and is present throughout the visit (Ayre, Phillbrick & Reiss, 2014, p. 89). Another European organization that addressed the need for a stable figure to accompany children during visits is the Spanish non-profit *Niños sin barreras*, which relies on volunteers from a variety of fields such as psychology and education to guide children through these stressful encounters (Niños sin barreras, 2016b).

Additionally, UK's POPSFamilies as created POPSICLE the Penguin (see Figure 7), a caricature guide for children through the prison visits process. Organizational twitter posts have spoke about the posters of POPSICLE that are in the search area of prisons and the stickers of his webbed feet that are on the floor guiding the way towards the visiting rooms (Children of Prisoners Europe in Facebook, n.d.)





Figure 7: Posters of POPSCILE

Volunteers accompanying children are not the only ambassadors available in prisons for children. Denmark established children's officers in each prison; Northern Ireland and Scotland introduced Family Link Officers in every prison responsible for improving the experience of visiting for children and families and Sweden has its equivalent called Children's Ombudspersons present in every prison ("Strengthening mutual trust", 2011, p. 12).

This same degree of supported visitation whether through the placement of Ombudspersons, the use of interactive drawings, and/or the training of volunteers to accompany children's visitation of their incarcerated caregivers did not appear in the research on Latin America. Rather, some recommendations were provided by the working groups from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' (IACHR) First Regional Seminar on the Protection of Peoples Deprived of Liberty, all children be required to attend visits accompanied by a responsible adult (IACHR, 2007).

Extended visits

Since normal visiting hours are often too short to celebrate special occasions and spend quality time as a family, French REP offers special prison visits for Mother's Day, Father's Day and other holidays. During these extended visits, caretakers are often not



present and the imprisoned parent and the child have access to “espaces enfants” - play areas for children aged 13 and under (Ayre, Phillbrick & Reiss, 2014, p. 101). In Denmark’s Jyderup prison, weekend visiting times are extended from 9:30 am to 7:30 pm and visitors are allowed to spend time in the visiting prisoner’s own room. In order to make the prisoner’s room more children-friendly, “facilities are provided so that families can cook meals together, eat together, have time to play and watch TV, and so on” (Robertson, 2011, p. 37).

This same type of special occasion and extended visits are sponsored by various Latin American NGOs. For example, the Chilean ONG Galerna associated with the governmental program *Abriendo Caminos* offers special prison visits for Mother’s Day and Father’s Day as part of their program geared towards the creation of protected visits for children (Galerna, 2015). Prison Fellowship International organizes special visitations around the holidays through their program Angel Tree, and according to their Facebook page, Argentina’s Civil Association of Family Members of Incarcerated Individuals in Federal Jails (ACiFaD) in conjunction with Church World Service (CWS) participated in the second encounter of family members of incarcerated individuals where children were provided a space for relaxation, fun and sharing (2016).

Visitation Accessibility

One of the main barriers to contact between a child and their incarcerated caregiver is the lack of available information about visitation policies, which vary from facility to facility. To address this barrier, Argentina’s ACiFaD works with the Center for Studies in Criminal Policy and Human Rights (CEPOC) to provide visitation information to families and inform them of their rights as family members of a person deprived of liberty. Additionally, ACiFaD participated in an initiative led by the National Office of the Procurator of Prisons to create a single, unified card for visitors to be able to gain access to any prison, in which their family member might be held. This initiative would create more uniformity among prison visitation policies and requirements for entrance (“Reclamo para tarjeta única”, March 2016).

POPSFamilies has a few prisons in the UK that they support. On their website they have visitation times, and visitor center information sheet for each prison that they work with. Additionally, they offer help with a range of issues, such as transportation, housing, and debt. Visitors are also able to join a family forum group where they can bring up any concerns or exchange ideas on how to make the visitor experience



friendlier (POPS, “HMP Wymott, n.d.).

Impact of Programs

The central objectives of each individual program guide their impact studies. As such, the measurements adopted by these impact studies vary from program to program, particularly when used to measure the short-term vs. long-term effects of each program. In the case of programs aimed at improving contact between incarcerated caregivers and their children, the impact might be measured through semi-structured interviews. Alternatively, programs aimed at advocating for the adoption of protocols on a policy-level might choose to measure their impact through an analysis of how these protocols guide political rhetoric and/or how many have informed new governmental policies and initiatives.

This report primarily discusses programs aimed at directly affecting the quantity and quality of incarcerated caregiver-child contact, however policy-driven programs are also referenced. While an independent study of the impacts of these objectively different programs is beyond the reach of the current study, we carried out a preliminary survey of existing impact studies produced by NGOs, governmental bodies or third-parties.

Due to the fact that the majority of the innovative programs mentioned in this report are fairly new, there is little data on the exact impact of these programs on children or inmates—whether they have been beneficial, how they can be improved, and/or how they can be implemented in different settings, etc. For example, the majority of the reports that come from COPE only tangentially address impacts by investigating how implemented programs dialogue with international conventions, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – CRC. In the Latin American case, a few recent impact reports have either been completed or are currently in their preliminary research phase. For example, the Uruguayan NGO *Fundación Entre Todos* in conjunction with the *Universidad Católica de Uruguay* published a report using semi-structured interviews with male inmates, their children, family caregivers, and prison officials to explore the perception of these inmates and their children (3 to 11 years of age), regarding their parent-child bond and the expectations associated with prison visits given the conditions in which they occur. This project acts as a first step in a project that pre-empts the NGO’s recent implementation a series of toy workshops that will provide transitional objects to strengthen this familial bond. The impacts of this



program will later be compared to this report, and shared at a community seminar (Techera, Garibotto & Urreta, 2012). Other programs that have evaluated the methodology and design of their programs include the Chilean initiative, *Abriendo Caminos* (Hormazábal Lombardo, 2012).

Discussion

A few comparative conclusions can be drawn from this preliminary study report of the visitation programs implemented by a wide-range of European and Latin American organizations that work to protect the rights of children of incarcerated caregivers. First, while both regions have regional networks of national NGOs that address this issue, COPE's initial founding over 20 years ago has potentially played a role in allowing the network and its partner NGOs to enter into a stage of implementation of programming that directly address the practical barriers of to child-incarcerated caregiver contact. Additionally, the history of this organization provides a strong foundation on which organizations that dedicate themselves specifically to this issue can build partnerships. In turn, Plataforma NNAPES recent foundation in 2015 provides less of this long-term stability, and also firmly places the network in the research and development phase (writing recommendations, raising awareness of the issue, and advocating for more accurate statistics on those children affected). The recent nature of Plataforma NNAPES is also reflected in the group of NGOs involved in the network, many of which tangentially address this issue as part of a larger investigation into vulnerable communities.

Secondly, while numerous European programs target improving the prison space to make it more family-friendly, no programs in Latin America specifically work on altering this physical space, but rather work to introduce toys to the space or carry out contact visitations in alternative spaces outside of prison. This is telling of another Latin American trend. Many of the noted NGOs focused more on helping the child holistically outside of the prison environment than creating spaces and policies that improve the parent-child relationship during prison visitation. These differences in the European and Latin American programs is even more stark in the case of video visitation and ambassador programs neither of which are central components of Latin American programs.

In the cases of artistic forms of incarcerated caregiver-child contact and extended visitations, there are some similarities between the two regions, as both provide an



array of unique programs geared towards using letters, drawings, video and tape recordings to strengthen family bonds, and also, programs have been put in place in both regions to allow for certain extended visitation days; for Latin America these days commonly are associated with holidays, while in Europe new measures have been put in place to ensure that some of these programs are more continuously available.

Recommendations

From these brief conclusions, a list of recommendations has been crafted. These recommendations are targeted towards CIC, and address specifically how this organization can move forward with their agenda on an international scale:

- Use this report as a reference to establish connections and dialogue with mentioned organizations in Latin America and the EU.
- Engage in further investigation as to how these European and Latin American innovative programs could be applicable to improving incarcerated caregiver-child contact in Minnesota.
- Allocate intellectual resources to further investigate the impact of these programs in their home countries on both a policy-level and on the improvement of the familial bond, ideally summarizing studies that provide both quantitative and qualitative data as not much is available on the international scale.
- Dedicate a future intern to the research of national visitation policies in these regions as this would allow for a more contextualized vision of the international contribution to the issue of incarcerated caregiver-child contact.
- Utilize this report as a working document that will constantly evolve, as more international organizations and programs will be implemented in the future.
- Participate in regional and international conferences with mentioned organizations and/or invite them to share their knowledge with CIC.
- Join the international community in advocating for alternatives to the dehumanizing security protocols (strip searches and body cavity searches) frequently implemented in the Latin American context.



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Appendix A

Organizations that Address the Rights of Children of Incarcerated Caregivers (Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean)

Organization	Country	Address	Phone Contact	Email Contact
ACOPE (Asociación de Colaboradores con las mujeres Presas)	Spain	C/López de Hoyos 109, 3 Dch, 28002, Madrid	915-931-001	info@acope.es
Action for Prisoners' and Offenders' Families ¹	The UK	15-17 The Broadway Hatfield Hertfordshire AL9 5HZ	07525 403 642	Simon Walsh on press@familylives.org.uk
Associazione Bambini Senza Sbarre	Italy	via Antonio Baldissera 1 – 20129 Milano	Tel. +39 (0) 2-711-998 – Fax +39 (0) 2-	associazione@bambinisenzasbarre.org

¹ NGOs listed in orange are part of The Children of Prisoners Europe Network (COPE)



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			3664-2957	
ASBL Relais Enfants-Parents	Belgium	Rue de Bordeaux, 62A 1060 Bruxelles Belgique	Tel : +32 (0)2 538 63 06 Fax : +32 (0)2 537 53 76	info@relaisenfantsparents.be
Bedford Row	Ireland	Bedford Row Family Project, Lower Bedford Row, Limerick	061- 315332	info@bedfordrow.ie
Bufff	Sweden	Magnus Ladulåsgatan 6 NB Stockholm	020-200330	info@bufff.nu
Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)	France	4-6 rue Charles Floquet BP 38, 92122 Motrouge	+33(0)1 42 53 71 85	hannah.lynn@networkcope.eu
Czech Helsinki Committee	Czech Republic	Štefánikova 21 150 00 Praha 5	257 221 142	info@helcom.cz
Families Outside	The UK	13 Great King Street Edinburgh EH3 6QW	0131 557 9800	admin@familiesoutside.org.uk
FFP (The Organisation for Families and Friends of Prisoners)	Norway	P.B. 6710, St. Olavsplass, 0130 Oslo	22 11 41 30	post@ffp.no
Fundación Padre Garralda- Horizontes Abiertos	Spain	C/Padre Rubio n. 76, Bajo B, 28029, Madrid	610 52 32 89	información@horizontesabiertos.org
Fundación Diagrama: Intervención Psicosocial	Spain	Avenida Ciudad de Almeria, 10 –bajo 3000, Murcia	Tel. 0034 968 344 344 Fax. 0034 968 344 979	diagrama@diagrama.org
KRITS (Kriminaalihuollon tukisäätiö)	Finland	Kinaporinkatu 2, 00500 Helsinki	+358 9 7743610	toimisto@kritis.fi



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NEPACS (North Eastern Prison After Care Society)	The UK	20 Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HW	+44 191 375 7278	info@nepacs.co.uk
NIACRO (Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders)	Northern Ireland	Amelia House, 4 Amelia Street Belfast BT2 7GS	028 9032 0157	niacro@niacro.co.uk
Niños sin barreras	Spain	c/ Ramón y Cajal, 57, 08012, Barcelona	659 799 852	contacto@ninossinbarreras.org
Office of the Ombudsman for Children	Croatia	Teslina 10 Zagreb 10000 Hrvatska	Telephone: 01/ 4929 669 Fax: 01/ 4921 277	info@dijete.hr
PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust)	The UK	29 Peckham Road London SE5 8UA	0207 735 9535	info@prisonadvice.org.uk
POPS (Partners of Prisoners)	The UK	POPS 1079 Rochdale Road, Blackley, Manchester, M9 8AJ	0161 702 1000	mail@partnersofprisoners.co.uk
REPR (Relais Enfants Parents Romands)	Switzerland	Rue du tunnel 1 CH-1005 Lausanne	021 791 02 72	kehrer@repr.ch
Slawek Foundation	Poland	ul. gen. Władysława Andersa 13 00 – 159 Warszawa	+48 22 258 19 97	biuro@fundacjaslawek.org
Solrosen	Sweden	Gothenburg Rescue Mission Andra 29 413 27 Gothenburg	031-712 12 00	info@raddningsmissionen.se
St Nicholas Trust	Ireland	34 Paul Street, Cork City, Cork	0861768266 0861768267	stnicholastrust@gmail.com



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Treffpunkt e.V	Germany	Fürther Str. 212 90429 Nürnberg	09 11 - 27 47 69- 0	bgv@treffpunkt-nbg.de
Abriendo Caminos	Chile	Ahumada 48, piso 7, Santiago	+56 02 2675 1400	Not listed
ACiFaD ² (Asociación de Familiares de	Argentina	Corrientes 1785 2do. C, Buenos Aires	011-15-6946- 0928	familiarsdedetenidos@gmail.com
Amparando Filhos	Brazil	Av. Assis Chateaubriand, n. 195- Setor Oeste, Golânia- GO CEP. 74.130-011	+55 (62) 3216- 2041	resp.socioambiental@tjgo.jus.br
Asociación Civil Gurises Unidos	Uruguay	Carlos Rolxo 1320, CP 1120, Montevideo	Telefax (00598) 2400 3081 – 2408 8572 -2409 6828	gurises@gurisesunidos.org.uy
Caminante Proyecto Educativo	Dominican Republic	Calle 20 de Diciembre No. 27 Altos, Esq. 24 de Junio, Boca Chica	+1 809-523-4143	proyectocaminante@hotmail.com
CELIV (Centros de Estudios Lationamericanos sobre Inseguridad y Violencia)	Argentina	Av Libertador General San Martín 2921, B1678GQF Gran Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires	+54 11 4759- 3537	celiv@untref.edu.ar
CEPOC (Centro de Estudios en Política Criminal y Derechos Humanos)	Argentina	Buenos Aires	Denise Feldman (lawyer) 1165775545	cepoc.dh@gmail.com
CWS- Latin America and the Caribbean	Regional	Camacua 238 B, (1406) Buenos Aires	Tel/Fax: +5411 4633-0833	infolac@cwsglobal.org
Colectivo Artesana	Guatemala	12 Calle 'A' 0-10 Zona 1, Ciudad Capital	Tel. 22512015, 22212886	casaartesana@gmail.com coordinación@colectivoartesana.org
Confraternidad Carcelaria- Costa Rica	Costa Rica	10599-1000, San José, Costa Rica	+506 2221 2439	carlos.brenes@cccstarica.org

² NGOs listed in blue are all part of Plataforma NNAPES' strategic regional alliance.



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Corporación CreArte	Chile	Dr. Torres Boonen 657, Providencia, Santiago	+56 2 2256520	http://www.create.cl/contacto/
DNI- Costa Rica (Defensa de Niñas y Niños Internacional)	Costa Rica	1760-2100 Guadalupe, San José, Costa Rica	Tel. =5-6 2234 91 34/2297 28 80/ 2297 28 85	info@dnicostarica.org
ENMARChA	Chile	Oficina Santiago: Marín 30, Santiago Oficina Maipú: Pasaje Dawson 2054	(+56 2)2222 8488 (+56 2)2766 3426	info@enmarcha.cl
Fundación Entre Todos	Uruguay	no information	no information	Prof. José Techera jtechera@ucu.edu.uy
Galerna	Chile	Valparaíso: Independencia 2686 Quilpué: Esmeralda 457 Los Andes: Balmaceda 158	322228380 322921859 342408010	consulta@galerna.cl
INPRHU (Instituto de Promoción Humana)	Nicaragua	Hospital Carlos Roberto Huembes 1/2c. arriba, Managua	+(505) 2271 2614	mgarcia@inprhu-managua.org
Plataforma NNAPES (Plataforma Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos de Niños, Niñas, Adolescentes con Madres y Padres Encarcelados)	Regional	No information	No information	plataformannapes@gmail.com coordinación@nnapes.org
PMMR (Projeto de Meninos e Meninas de Rúa)	Brazil	R. Jurubatuba, 1610- Centro, São Bernardo do Campo-SP, 09725- 001	+55 11 4339- 1476	projetommdruea@uol.com.br



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REDNANIAP	Panama	Km. 19, Interamericana, Arraijan, Hogar San José de Malambo, Arraiján	(507)344- 9498/9499 (507)6955-6866	rednyapanama@gmail.com
Red por los derechos de la infancia	Mexico	Av. México Coyoacan 350, Col. General Anaya México, Distrito Federal 03340	5 604 24 66	buzon@derechosinfancia.org.mx
S.E.T (Students Expressing Truth)	Jamaica	Kingston, Jamaica		studentsexpressingtruth@gmail.com
SERPAJ- Uruguay	Uruguay	Joaquín Requena 1642, Montevideo	Tel. (+598)2 408 5301 Fax: (+598)2 408 5701	serpajuy@serpaj.org.uy

