

Opinions, motivations, expectations and training in the court-appointed defenders for Juvenile Court courses.

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PURPOSE:

In 1989 the Italian Government issued the Decree-law n. 448 of 22nd September 1988 of the President of the Republic, which contains New Provisions for the Juvenile Criminal Action.

The Juvenile Court System is based both on the personality of the minor and on the principle of “the best interests of the child”. It is essential not to interrupt the infant’s growth.

For these reasons it is necessary for the operators of the Juvenile Court System to attend psychological, pedagogical and vocational training, besides the legal education. In particular the purpose of my research was to analyze the court appointed defenders to the juvenile court. In fact article n. 15 of the Decree-law n. 272 of 28th July 1989 of the President of the Republic requires only for the court appointed defenders, but not for the private counsels, the compulsory attendance at follow-up and specialization courses, concerning the juvenile law and the problems of the developmental age, but it doesn’t point out the duration of such courses or the instructions for their development.

In this work, I have examined the motivations, expectations, opinions and training of the courses for court appointed defenders and whether the attendance at such courses could be capable for changing the participants’ mind in respect of their psychological and sociological points of view.

SAMPLE:

- At the Specialization Course in Milan, (it started on 18th April 2000 and finished on 7^h July 2000), there were sixty participants; it was programmed and coordinated by a psychologist (Dr.ssa Rosanna Della Corte) and a lawyer (Dr.ssa Paola Boccardi), with the scientific supervision of Professor Guglielmo Gulotta (psychologist and defender). The course was split into two different levels: 1) to convey information and knowledge; 2) to train, to learn by experience through: role-playing, modeling and videotapes. The course emphasized the importance of relational and social skills.

- The Specialization Course in Turin, (it started on 28th March 2000 and finished on 26th June 2000), was coordinated only by a lawyer (Dott. Augusto Fierro). This course was attended by a hundred participants and the informative level was the fundamental argument.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT:

Three questionnaires were employed for the participants to fill in, at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the courses.

RESULTS:

● The participants wanted to get a plural training, that is, it is necessary for them in order to integrate the technical and legal aspects with the psychological and social ones.

● About knowledge (“know what”) the lawyers asked for getting deep into juvenile law and the procedural aspects. About training (“know how” and “know to be”) they would prefer to learn software to make use of knowledge, problem solving processes, and social and relational skills (“psychology indirect function”). The significance of these aspects was mostly recognized by the participants of the Milan course, which itself deepened more into psychological matters.

● Most of the participants recognized the objectives, principles and purposes of the juvenile court.

● If during the course the professionals and organizers paid attention to the practical aspects, the lawyers would have been more satisfied. The result was that in the course held in Milan the percentage of satisfaction was higher than in the Turin's one.

CONCLUSIONS:

The training of the Defense counsels need:

- The collaboration among the participants;
- The indirect function of psychology (trainers should use scientific methods such as: role-playing, modeling and videotapes).
- Teams with different professionals;
- Integration between the psychological and the legal aspects.

Plural training has always to take into account the specific and fundamental principle of “the best interest of the child”.

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