

World Awareness for Children in Trauma (WACIT)



Visiting centres for children in trauma across six continents: Implications for European child psychiatry

The recent phase of the World Awareness for Children in Trauma (WACIT – www.wacit.org) involved consecutive workshops in different settings and parallel resilience-building events for vulnerable children groups. The countries and target groups were: Greece (unaccompanied minors), Turkey (street and refugee children), Indonesia (children in orphanages), Australia (Aboriginal children in disadvantaged communities), USA (homeless and other disaffected youth), Brazil (children living in favelas), Kenya (children victims of ethnic displacement), and Tanzania (street children).

There were several lessons and emerging opportunities for the future in developing service models, training programmes, guidelines, and research. A socioecological resilience-model was tested both in terms of case management and organizational change in seemingly different contexts such as NGOs, social care staff and child mental health practitioners. The most obvious implication for European child psychiatry was how to apply such knowledge to respond to the refugee crisis by adopting a needs-led clinical, consultative, training and strategic role. Placing child psychiatry in the centre of such developments requires constantly evolving skills and competencies. The global expansion of child mental health also means that European child psychiatrists are ideally placed to form networks and partnerships with colleagues and services in low- and middle-income countries to contribute with both clinical and research expertise.

