

# Storytelling as the most suitable research method for Quality4Children

## Method of data collection

The storytelling method is easy to use and gives a clear picture of the social reality through the stories. With careful preparation all target-groups can participate, especially children and young persons. Telling a story is something very natural for humans, as we have used this method to transport knowledge ever since we have been able to communicate.

It is anchored in the project's nature that children and young persons provide the information frame for developing the quality standards in out-of-home care. Storytelling gives children of any age (even if they are still not able to read or write) the opportunity to directly provide information on good practices. Stories have a great advantage because emotions can be expressed and the whole picture drawn of what moves us.

## Research part

**Training:** After having defined the project and the methodology to be used, the national coordinators (NCs) gathered at the Hermann-Gmeiner Academy in Innsbruck to be trained in the storytelling method. The NCs were instructed in the theory of storytelling, received practical training in “telling the right story”, as well as in analyzing and formulating output stories (summaries).

**Data collection:** The NCs first assignment was to collect data samples (stories) within a predefined quote system in their countries. The collected stories were translated in to English and sent to the Hermann-Gmeiner Academy in Innsbruck for further processing.

**Data Analysis:** An analyze team organized the stories in demographic groups and coded them. The analysis consisted in identifying key sentences in the stories. These sentences were the topics of interest in the story or statements where the storyteller (interviewee) showed feelings through his/her narration.

**Data organization:** It was one of the project team's hypotheses that the out-of-home care process was divided in four phases: decision-making process, admission process, care-taking process and out-of-care process. After conducting the analysis of the stories the hypotheses proved right.

The identified sentences were coded to guarantee the information's traceability and emptied into a matrix. The matrix had five areas, one for each of the out-of-home care phases (decision-making, admission, etc.) as well as an area for unexpected themes, by which is meant topics that were not contemplated in the formation of the hypotheses.

## Final results

A report was then elaborated in order to illustrate the results of the different areas contemplated in the matrix. This report included the methodology used, the analysis, demographic data, the results of each area, and recommendations. Every quotation included in the report as example, was identified by a code.