

The Me-We objectives

- To **systematise knowledge** on adolescent young carers in six European countries (Sweden, Slovenia, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland and UK) by (a) identifying their profiles, needs and preferences; b) analysing national policy, legal and service frameworks and (c) reviewing good practices, social innovations and evidence;
- To **co-design**, develop and test - together with adolescent young carers - **a framework of effective and multicomponent psychosocial interventions for primary prevention** and focused on improving their mental health and well-being, to be adapted to in 6 European countries, at different stages of awareness and development of services for young carers;
- To **carry out wide knowledge translation actions** for dissemination, awareness promotion and advocacy, by spreading results among relevant stakeholders at national, European and international level.

For the first time, a large scale programme will demonstrate the impact of a comprehensive primary prevention intervention for improving adolescent young carers' resilience, so that the negative aspects related to caring can be counterbalanced by enhanced social and individual coping resources.

During its lifetime (January 2018 - March 2021) and beyond, the project is expected to contribute to greater health equity and improved societal benefits, as well as to reduced occurrence of mental disorders, co-morbidities and socio-economic disadvantages during the life-course.



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The project partners

Linnaeus University (lead partner)	Sweden	
Eurocarers	Belgium	
University of Sussex	United Kingdom	
Carers Trust	United Kingdom	
Kalaidos University of Applied Sciences	Switzerland	
Netherlands Institute for Social Research	Netherlands	
Vilans	Netherlands	
National Institute of Health and Science on Ageing	Italy	
Not Only Older People	Italy	
University of Ljubljana	Slovenia	

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#youngcarers

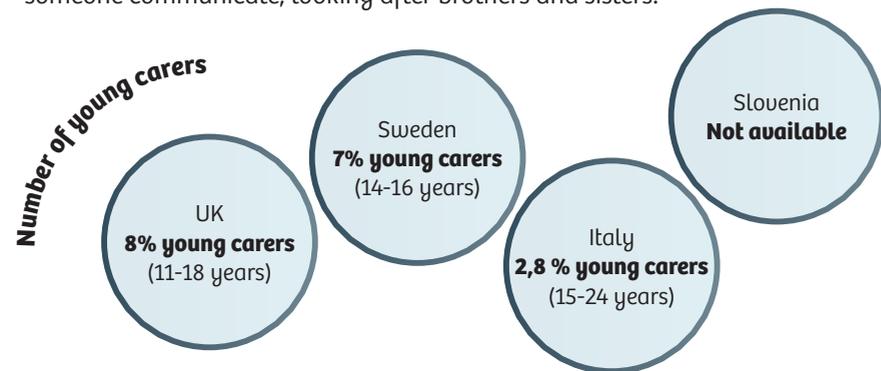


Psychosocial Support for Promoting Mental Health and Well-being among adolescent Young Carers in Europe (Me-We)

Who are young carers and how many young carers are there?

Young carers are “*children and young persons under 18 who provide or intend to provide care, assistance or support to another family member. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility that would usually be associated with an adult. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care, support or supervision*” (S. Becker). Those who fall within the definition but are aged 18-24 are considered young adult carers. Adolescent young carers are young carers aged 15-17.

The tasks implemented by young and young adult carers can consist in: practical tasks (e.g. cooking, housework and shopping); physical care (e.g. helping someone out of bed); emotional support (e.g. talking to someone who is distressed); personal care (e.g. helping someone dress); managing the family budget and collecting prescriptions; helping to give medicine; helping someone communicate; looking after brothers and sisters.



The impact of caring on young people's mental health and wellbeing and life chances

Mental Health & Well-being

Young carers can gain satisfaction from caring and experience a range of emotional aspects such as self-esteem, empathy, maturity. Yet, caring can also entail a lot of pressure. In particular, for young adult carers having to reconcile new life challenges (e.g. entering the labor market, attending university courses, starting their own family) with caring responsibilities can be overwhelming. The pressure associated with caring can be considered as a risk factor for mental ill-health.

Education

In the absence of adequate support, caring can have a negative impact on young carers' education, as it can entail under-achievement, absence and drop-outs. These short term effects can cause low employability in the long term, due to lower educational qualifications and attitudes towards higher education.

Social Life

Young carers might have less dedicated time for personal development and leisure, as well as difficulties in integrating with other students. They can also become victim of social stigma and bullying, with the result of a higher life course social exclusion.

“Being an adolescent young carer is recognised as a risk factor for mental health and wellbeing, with around 50% experiencing care-related stress and 40% mental health problems.” (Carers Trust, 2016)

Towards improved resilience and enhanced social support for adult young carers

The Me-We project aims to mitigate the risk factor of being an adolescent young carer by empowering the young with improved resilience (the process of negotiating, managing and adapting to significant sources of stress or trauma) and enhanced social support (from family, schools, peers, services).

