



Gezin in Balans

**Family in Balance:
Back with the family and back in society
Family support and social resettlement for (ex)
detained mothers**



Table of contents

Introduction

1. Where is Family in Balance working at?
2. Family in Balance in a birds flight
3. Characteristics of programmes of Family in Balance
4. Work principles of Family in Balance
5. Products of Family in Balance

Enclosure 1	Humanitas
Enclosure 2	Case Family in Balance
Enclosure 3	Flowchart Family in Balance
Enclosure 4	Literature list



Introduction

Annually there are about 3000 women in one of the four penitentiaries in the Netherlands. It is estimated that 70% of these imprisoned women are mother of one or more children. During imprisonment they cannot accomplish their roll as a mother, because they hardly see the children. These women have difficulty to take up the thread of social- and family life again.

*When I came home to all my children, I did not know where I had to start. My mother-companion of Family in Balance has really helped me with all my questions."
(participant Family in Balance)*

(Ex)-imprisoned mothers often have little self-respect and a negative image of themselves. They have difficulty to function independent and to take responsibility. It is also trying for them to find a job and a new accommodation after their release from prison.

Some women can't or won't go back to the old environment, because they have been victim of aggression. Contrasted with many male offenders they have no partner and a home to go back to. Their children are hurt, have lost contact with their mother, isolate themselves and behave disorderly at times.

These specific circumstances and problematic nature of imprisoned mothers ask for an adjusted approach during and after their detention*. Family in Balance offers such an adjusted approach in family support, in combination with social resettlement programmes, for (ex) imprisoned mothers. They support not only (ex)- imprisoned mothers after their return in society, but precisely within the family. Such programmes are not only in the interest of the mother. Also the functioning of the children depends on it. Many of these children have been hurt before and after the imprisonment of their mother. Research has shown that children of imprisoned mothers form a risk group. * Children under age of imprisoned mothers are often pictured by youth welfare work or should have been.*

I read much about my children, since I gave birth to my child fifteen months ago. Because of the imprisonment I don't have the possibility to raise him my self. I now try a little to get

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- The necessity of a specific approach links with the development that the "female offender" did get more attention in policy and research. "Gender" has become an explicit point of attention, as a result of which it is clear that women ask for a different approach (Bloom, 2003)
 - Children of an offender run a high risk in the future to show disorderly behaviour problems. (Lipsy & Derzon 1998)
 - From research by the Verwey-Jonker Institute, as instructed by Family in Balance, it becomes apparent that there isn't always contact between juvenile care and the under-age children at the moment the mother is rounded up. These children are sometimes at home all by themselves in stead of being looked after by family, friends or institutes (Braam a.o.,2007)

*prepared for my reunion and the possible problems. Through the training of Family in Balance I did get more insight.
(participant Family in Balance")*

Unfortunately persons involved often experience a great distance to the regular support institutes. The offer of Family in Balance goes along and forms a lifeline to life outside prison. Through the accessible approach Family in Balance can signal quickly, when after returning in the family something goes wrong, and throw a bridge across regular facilities.

With this offer-description Family in Balance will show what they exactly are doing, in what way and what the effects will be. The first chapter describes the starting points of Family in Balance and the specific problems of ex-imprisoned mothers where Family in Balance adapts to. Chapter two presents the offer of Family in Balance in a bird's eye. In chapter three the characteristics of the programmes are paramount and in chapter four the work principles which are underlying the offer. In chapter five the specific products of Family in Balance are described in short.



1. Where is Family in Balance working at?

Family in Balance is a Humanitas project*. The project started in 2002 and is part of the project Balancing the Future*. Family in Balance is financed by European stimulating means, Humanitas and the Orange fund (Oranje fonds) The past years Family in Balance has developed their vision, method, way of work and various means of support. On this point she has exchanged experiences with other European countries. The project has expanded in the meantime into a country wide directed complete offer for ex-imprisoned mothers in the field of upbringing support and family supervision and social resettlement.

Starting points for Family in Balance

Family in Balance works at two objectives: improving the mother-child relationship and the independent act of the mother in society. The thought behind this is that the act of the mother in society and within the family influences one another. Children in families, of which the mother has been imprisoned, are in general exposed to more risk facts. One risk fact does not lead irrevocably to problems in the development of a child. A storage of risk facts, however, enlarges considerable the chance on getting problems*. Problems and stress that the mother has, for instance about accommodation or finance has negative recoil on the upbringing climate in the family. The directed approach of the problems that families have in more life areas, is important to prevent big problems in a later stage of development of the children. For a good and stable family life and growing up climate, good accommodation, a supporting network and a sound financial situation are, among others, necessary. Performing a function, in society and within the family, must therefore be inter-related, being integral addressed. Herewith re-offending of ex-imprisoned mothers can be prevented, but also the mental and behaviour problems of the children, within the family involved.

Family in Balance calls upon ex-imprisoned mothers to take responsibilities and that of others, in particular their children. They stimulate these mothers to adapt to their environment less dependent and to address their affairs themselves. When the mother feels good, this will have a positive effect on the development of the children and provides a contribution to the stable environment where her children can develop themselves.

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Leave your seat and loose it

70% of the ex-female offenders have children. A mother is expected to pick up the thread of family life and the upbringing, immediate after her release from prison, while she has hardly seen her child during a long period and has handed over the care to others. From research(Winkelhorst 2002) comes to the fore that this has had a negative effect on the mother-child relationship and the behaviour of the children themselves.

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- Humanitas is an organization that provides services in the area of housing, care and welfare in particular to those who need, temporary, support to shape their lives in their own way. For more information see enclosure 1.
 - Balancing the Future is a collaboration that focuses on the resettlement of female offenders. The aim is to shape the collaboration between the various organizations in such a way that the release from prison to a free society progresses in the best possible way in the life areas such as housing, work and family.
 - The presence of two risk facts triples the chance on problems, four or more facts, tenfold this chance. (Hermanns, 2001)

A white lie?

Mothers in detention often struggle with enormous feelings of guilt with regard to their children. They don't know if and how they have to tell their children that "mum" is in prison. Because mothers don't know how to make the subject open for discussion to their children, a number of them make the choice not to tell them at all. Children don't know any better or their mother is on vacation or remains abroad for her work: "the lie is in control" This hampers the communication between mother and child and has negative effects on their relation.

From research from van Nijnatten it became clear how important it is that parents communicate with their children about their detention:

"This is not to say that detention in prison should become the one and only topic of household discussion, but that the child be told all the relevant aspects of imprisonment and what can be expected for the future. No things should be excluded from this information, apart from giving the child details of crime.... Reality is often sad and painful, but is more painful and more difficult to negotiate, if you can only guess at what further lies behind it." (van Nijnatten 1998)

Little self respect and a negative self image

Imprisoned mothers often have a limited feeling of self-respect and a negative self-image. By doing so they hardly take in hand complex situations independently. Many of these mothers have little education, little job experience and don't have a clear impression of their possibilities and limitations. Their ability to make deliberate choices for the long term is very limited.

Culprit, but also victim

Many detained mothers often come from broken families, where there is talk of (sexual) abuse or other violence. In general they haven't come to terms with their traumas or did so in a bad way. They often have debts, little education, live in inadequate homes, come from a drug related environment and are poorly emancipated. This all makes that these mothers, besides being the culprit, also are the victims.

Combination labour and care

Having a job means economic independence, offers social contacts and provides a contribution for the feeling of self-respect. Practice will show that the complete and direct fitting in of work for women with care responsibilities, after their release from prison, is asking too much. Increasing one's roll for care and being a mother asks for much energy and time, both for the mother and the children.

2. Family in Balance in bird's eye view.

The Netherlands has four penitentiaries for women, Breda, ter Peel, Nieuwersluis and Zwolle. Family in Balance has assigned one co-ordinator for each penitentiary for women. The co-ordinators are working closely together with the co-workers of the penitentiaries. Together they see to it that mothers, who want it, can make use of the offer of Family in Balance. For the implementation of the offer, Family in Balance works with experienced trainers. For each full time co-ordinator 25 volunteers are needed.

Offer: practical family support and signalling.

During imprisonment mothers can participate in "Mother Goose". A game where participants get information from representatives of the Justice department, communities, juvenile care and legal practice. Mothers also learn effortlessly more about the possibilities of after care after their release from prison. They talk about how to come to terms with their own situation and how they can improve life circumstances of their children. The mothers also practice ways to pick up the contacts with their children and to communicate with their children about what has happened. Family in Balance works during their imprisonment with so-called "visit mothers". Volunteers, who themselves are parent/up bringer, visit the imprisoned mothers to talk frankly about the children. For instance how the contact is with the children or how to contact them anew. Resources are two child books that are written by Family in Balance. "A mum in prison" is a picture book for the smallest of all, where children in a playful manner have a qualified image of life in prison. "Mum lives somewhere else" is a book for children somewhat older about the taboos around a mother in prison. The book also contains instructions for mother and child such as "how do I stay in contact with mum" and "asking about mum".

"My little boy thought I wasn't allowed to leave my cell. He had never talked to me about it until he had read the book" (participant Family in Balance)

"I thought that I had an open relation with my little boy, but only after he had read the book has he told me how my custody was for him. We have been able to talk about it openly and now he is able to come to terms with it in a better way. He always takes the book under his arm with him when he visits me. (participant Family in Balance)

At the end of imprisonment mothers can participate in the training Me-You-We. (Ik-JIJ-WIJ). During this training the participants practice social and upbringing skills and get insight in their characters

.After imprisonment there are "mother-companions". Volunteers who themselves are mother/up bringer and they visit the participants at home, in their family situation. They support the mothers with all kinds of practical matters that are taken place in and around the family and again by elaborating their role as up bringer. Think about up bring support, making social contacts and finding their way in the local field of social facilities. Family in Balance accomplishes with the commitment of volunteers an important signal function. The volunteers are accessible and less threatening than regular care provider and are closer to the mother. They see a lot that goes on within the families and so they can indicate in time problems and worrisome behaviour with the children. In an early stage care can be provided.

Results: Stronger in dealing with children and a place in society

The procedure and the products of Family in Balance are monitored resident and non-resident. In the first satisfaction-readings of Family in Balance, mothers indicate that they feel stronger in dealing with the children, because of the offer of Family in Balance. They experience that, as a result, their children are functioning better and that they themselves are finding it easier to have a place in society. In enclosure 2 is a case where these results are illustrated.

“ I never thought that I was a good mother, but I have learned what my qualities are. By looking at my capacities and my reactions at my daughter I have experienced what I can and this has now already improved my relation with my child ”(participant Family in Balance)

The results of a comparable intervention, Home-Start, support these results. Home-Start offers support for families with young children up till six years. Experienced volunteers visit the family, on average once a week, at home and offer support, friendship and practical assistance. Family in Balance has elaborated on the work method of Home-Start with the difference that Family in Balance doesn't handle an age-limit for the children. Home-Start knows a comprehensive system of quality care and is tested on effectiveness. Parents show more up bring competence and experience less stress after the commitment of Home-Start. They manage the up bring better, have more self confidence and feel getting more support from their environment. (Ince, 2004). Recent research confirms these findings (Asscher, Hermanns&Dekovic, 2006) Besides it is known that interventions are more effective, when focusing explicit on parents and children getting a hold again on their lives, and when focusing at different life areas that connect to the way the family experience problems. (Hermanns, 2007)

“ Through the support of Family in Balance I express my feelings better and manage my money better” (participant Family in Balance)

Growing need for Family in Balance

From figures becomes evident that there is a growing need for the offer of Family in Balance. In the first project years of Family in Balance, from 2002 until 2005, 120 products of Family in Balance have been made. In the period 2005 – 2007 this number has doubled to 246. This increase has to do, on the one hand, with a growing need of the ex-imprisoned mothers for specific family support and after care. On the other hand there is talk of a growing need by the penal institutions to offer the products of Family in Balance. In the first years of the project the different products have been offered to just one of the four penitentiaries. It was then about a programme to be developed. From May 2007 on in, the products of Family in Balance are offered to all penitentiaries. This means a greater reach of the total number of ex-imprisoned mothers. At the same time new questions arise for Family in Balance to develop products and care. Hence shows a growing need for the offer of Family in Balance.

3. Programme characteristics of Family in Balance

The programme that Family in Balance offers to ex-imprisoned mothers has a number of specific characteristics. These characteristics aim to connect as good as possible to the needs of the mother, her life-and family environment and to adapt to more life areas at the same time. This contributes to the success of the programme.

During and after imprisonment

For a successful social resettlement, it is important that the programme has an early start and not at the moment that people return in society. This means that mothers already get information during their detention and can participate in training that adds to their self-respect. After the detention Family in Balance offers extensive after care in the area of upbringing and practical affairs around the family. Family in Balance forms a bridge for the regular care supply.

Tailor made question

A programme of Family in Balance consists of a combination of products dependent on the wishes and possibilities of the participant. The co-ordinator and the mother look together what the questions and the needs of the mother are. Subsequently a tailor made programme is put together. In this way Family in Balance links with the motivation of the mother, and this has a positive effect on the result of the programme.

Commitment of volunteers (supported by professionals)

Family in Balance works with well trained and coached volunteers, who themselves are parent/up bringer. Family in Balance chooses consciously for working with volunteers, because they present a special dimension to the quality of work. Volunteers are closer to the life situation of people, who ask for care and assistance. It showed that just that little distance between the help-receiver and the help-giver creates time for contact and "usual" experience-expertise*. The volunteers visit the family in their own neighbourhood and they rely on a bond with the mother on the basis of equality. From this equality they offer practical care and support.

"I am looked upon as a person and as a mother, not as a prisoner."(participant Family in Balance")

Working with a vulnerable target group poses extra demands for support by volunteers. The co-ordinator is responsible for this support and to create the right limiting conditions for the volunteers. So she selects carefully which ex-imprisoned. Mothers can participate in Family in Balance* and she offers volunteers a training of eight dayshifts preparing them for their

* Also from the companion-projects with "difficult" target groups like the roofless and homeless and teenage mothers it seems that, through the commitment of volunteers, there is more room for social aspects such as prevention of social exclusion and falling back on old friendships.

*The co-ordinator excludes ex-imprisoned mothers from participating when they are drug-alcohol addicted, struggle with serious mental problems or committed a crime against their children. On the one hand the problem is too heavy and on the other hand there already often is a care network

work. Besides, the co-ordinator supports the volunteers in their work with monthly coaching talks, return- and theme meetings.

The volunteer and the co-ordinator of Family in Balance maintain a regular contact about the development of the ex-imprisoned mother.

The volunteer signals and the co-ordinator get busy with the indicators. When there are problems with departments like social services, money reform or juvenile care, then the co-ordinator, together with the mother make contact with these departments.

Voluntary participation

Ex-imprisoned mothers report voluntarily for Family in Balance. This motivation not only enlarges the chance on success of the programme, but is also important for volunteers. Their commitment is valuable and has to be cherished, but also has its limits. Volunteers may not be saddled with the forced participation of ill motivated mothers. This doesn't mean by the way, that the programme is without any obligation. At the start the co-ordinator makes concrete proposals with the participant in the project.

Mutual respect, equality and interaction

Family in Balance is taking care of a climate where mothers feel safe to work at their self-respect and social skills. The volunteer supports the mother. She doesn't take over and offers no social support that contributes to the equality. For families struggling with more problems it is important to "stand beside" them. The volunteer is building a bond of confidence with the mother, based on mutual respect and taking each other seriously.

Integral approach

With an integral approach Family in Balance handles the problems of ex-imprisoned mothers in different life areas at the same time. This enlarges the chance on a successful resettlement substantially. The up bring and development of children can't be seen apart from the social environment, the financial and accommodation situation, and the other way around. To realize this integral approach, Family in Balance is looking for collaboration with local economic and social partners, such as social services, housing agencies, resettlement-companies, juvenile care and social work. The co-ordinators have ample knowledge of the social chart and maintain contact with local care agencies. They also monitor the atonement and the progress, local agencies are offering to ex-imprisoned mothers. This method connects with projects around "family coaching" that started some years ago in several municipalities. These projects focus on families with plural problems. The experiences from these projects learn that it is important to support the different life areas where problems occur. Besides, the co-ordination is important. With these families there are often more care providers or agencies involved, between which atonement and collaboration is needed. The family-coach performs, by doing so, a co-ordinating roll. (Schaafsma, 2005)

Supplement on regular provisions

The target group of Family in Balance often makes ill use of regular provisions, such as the offer for financial and legal help and up bring support. They don't know the offer that is available or don't make use of it, because of negative experiences. Some of the mothers also behave contra productive in their contacts with agencies. They don't open letters of care providing agencies or are getting angry at the desk. To be self-reliant, ex-imprisoned mothers make maximum use of provisions. Family in Balance maintains therefore her specific offer as little as possible and takes as little as possible over from the mother. Family in Balance does show the mother the provisions and stimulates her to use them. If necessary they support the mother.

4. Work principles of Family in Balance.

The work method of Family in Balance is based on a number of specific work principles. These work principles are focused on strengthening the skills and qualities of ex-imprisoned mothers, so that they are capable in time to put their life and that of the children on track. The mothers get insight in their own (im)possibilities, work at a more positive self-image and enlarge their social, emotional and practical competences.

Learning practical and social skills

Ex-imprisoned mothers learn practical and social skills. This happens individually or by training in a group, but also during the supervision of the mothers in everyday life, during and after detention. Mothers are stimulated to exercise specific tasks and orders, which sufficiently connect with their possibilities and offer sufficient challenges to learn from.

Empowerment

Many ex-imprisoned mothers have a negative self-image and little confidence in the future. There often is talk of resistance towards change; "the new is unsafe". They have developed a sort of defence-system against it. Family in Balance makes mothers aware of these blocking thought patterns and teaches them to bend these to more "helping" thoughts. The volunteers connect as much as possible with what is good and with the power and possibilities of the family. These, they use when solving the problems. By doing so the mother gets the feeling getting a hold again on her own life and the self-confidence grows that she again can manage the up bring.

Learning by experience and "sitting on hands"

Learning by experience ex-imprisoned mothers gain knowledge, attitudes and skills about themselves and about their environment. That they do by self-observation and taking part in concrete situations. The approach of Family in Balance starts from self-reliance of the participants and stimulates the mothers making steps of their own and by giving signals. Volunteers support them. They don't take anything over, but stay "sitting on their hands". They have an eye for what the mother wants and are not leading the way with suggestions. The mother is challenged to manage herself and by so doing obtains experience and learns from it. This happens above all in practical situations that have to do with the up bring, network change, work experience and living.

Active and outreaching approach

It can be that a participant doesn't have the ability to manage herself and is giving signals. Disappointment, stagnation or dropout from the programme often is the result. On such a moment professional help is forthcoming. They operate to reach out at the moment the barriers for the mother are too high or the mother doesn't make the first step herself. The thought behind this "out reach" support is that very vulnerable groups of people are not able (anymore) to make (can make) the first step themselves.

5. Products of Family in Balance

Family in Balance has several products, where ex-imprisoned mothers can make use of during or after their detention, to improve the relation with their children and to act independent in society. Volunteers that are parent/up bringer mainly implement these products. The co-ordinators support them and maintain contact with relevant local departments. Mothers can apply for the offer of Family in Balance during their detention via co-worker of the penal institution. Once being released from prison, mothers can apply directly to the co-ordinators of Family in Balance.

Mother Goose	Informative meeting with the start of imprisonment
Visit-mothers	Facilitating companion contacts during imprisonment
Me-You-We	Training just before the end of imprisonment
Going out together	Facilitating going out for the weekend with a volunteer, just after being released from prison.
Mother mates	Facilitating companion contacts after being released from prison.
Living in Balance	Mediating accommodation and support in shaping the housing condition, after being released from prison.

Besides, Family in Balance implements activities, creating the limiting conditions to actual offer the products. It is mainly about information, training and network-activities.

Information

Family in Balance offers information to bring the offer of Family in Balance to the attention of the penal institutions and the non-resident partners.

Recruitment, training, and support

Family in Balance recruits volunteers, and offers the volunteers an extended training and support them during their work with work consultations and group meetings.

Network

To be able to realize the integral approach and to make a link with regular provisions, Family in Balance is looking for collaboration with local partners and invest in networking in the local infrastructure.

Product Mother Goose

Target group

Mothers who are first- offenders or have not been imprisoned for a long time and are staying in a Remand House. The mothers report via a co-worker of the penal institution to a co-ordinator of Family in Balance, themselves.

Targets

- The mother has obtained information and/or advice connecting with actual questions and needs in relation to the family.
- The mother feels that her problems are recognised and she can share experiences.
- The mother has more self-confidence and a realistic view on possibilities and limitations in the actual situation.
- The mother knows a number of possible solutions for actual problems, such as making and maintaining contact with the children and she has taken notice of relevant forms of care.
- The mother has a hold again on the situation wherein she finds herself.

Duration and frequency

An informative meeting of two hours on average.

Setting

A group of a maximum of 16 mothers with representatives of, for instance, the Justice department, municipalities, juvenile care, legal practice, and after care partners. The meeting is executed by 4 volunteers in a meeting room within the penal institution.

Workmethod/activities

With the support of a "life goose board" imprisoned mothers, together with volunteers, look for information and answers on questions they have. Both "know"questions as "do"-questions come up for discussion:

- The "know"questions are about legislation (placing under supervision) financial accommodation, care provision and after care, for instance "What happens with my child during my absence", "Can my children visit me" and "What happens with my home and income". The present experts answer these questions.
- The "do"questions are about how the mothers can fill in their mother roll during the detention. About these questions the mothers can talk among themselves and to the volunteers. In the light of these instructions tip-offs are exchanged about questions as "How do you keep in contact with your child"and "How do you react on the phone if your child is angry or sad".

Limiting conditions

- Familiarity with the offer for the informal meeting with co-workers and prisoners within the penal institutions.
- Availability of trained volunteers
- Support from the volunteers by means of work-discussions and group meetings.

Product Visit-mothers

Targetgroup

Imprisoned mothers. The mothers report to the co-ordinator of Family in Balance via a co-worker of the penitentiary.

Targets

- The mother feels that her problems are recognised and she can share experiences.
- The stress, among other things, by missing contact or the confused contact with the children, remain manageable for the mother.
- The mother stays in contact with the outside world, as a result of which, the return in the family and society is less threatening.
- The mother has more self-confidence and a realistic outlook on possibilities and limitations for restoring contact with her children and others.
- The mother has a grip on making contact and to maintain it with her children.

Duration and frequency

Once every two weeks up to twice a month. During a few months until the whole time in detention.

Setting

The visit-mother visits the imprisoned mother in the penitentiary.

Workmethod/activities

The co-ordinator of Family in Balance has an interview with the imprisoned mother. On the basis of background and interests, the co-ordinator brings about a link between the imprisoned mother and a volunteer, the visit-mother. The essence of this product is men to men contact; an equal relation that improves the self-respect of the imprisoned mother.

During visits a great number of subjects can come up for consideration; for instance around the family, upbringing and networking. It is important that the imprisoned mothers can tell their story about their children and the contacts with them and to keep in touch with the outside world.

Resources for communication between mother and child are two child books and a diary.

- "A mum in prison", a picture book for the under aged
- "Mum lives somewhere else", a book for older children
- Diary for imprisoned mothers, a manual that the mother and the volunteer can use with their conversations.

Additional information

If possible and wishful, the contact remains after the release from prison, in the form of the product Mother-companion

Limiting conditions

- Familiarity with the offer of visit-mothers with co-workers and offenders within the penitentiary.
- Availability of trained volunteers.
- Support from the volunteers by means of work-discussions and group meetings.

Product Me-You-We

Targetgroup

Mothers during the last stage of their detention. The mothers report to the co-ordinator of Family in Balance via a co-worker of the penitentiary.

Targets

- The self-confidence and self-reliance of the mother in her roll as up bringer has increased.
- The mother has more self-confidence and a realistic view on possibilities and limitations for restoring the contact with her children.
- The mother acquires communication- and up brings skills and can apply these in the contact with her children.

Duration and frequency

A personal interview followed by 8 weekly training-sessions of 2,5 hours each time.

Setting

A group of 12 mothers with a trainer/co-coordinator of Family in Balance. In a meeting room in the penitentiary.

Workmethod/activities

Psycho-education and behaviour modification form the most important elements of this training. The accent is on increasing the insight in own possibilities, learning to choose and learning to utilize well-placed up bring situations. The mothers learn:

- To work energetic on restoring the relation with their children.
- To cope with limitations, to see opportunities and to think creative.
- To say what they mean and feel.
- To set boundaries.
- To cope constructively with conflicts.

Limiting conditions

- Familiarity with the offer of training, by the co-workers and offenders, in the penitentiary.
- The trainer/co-coordinator has completed a HVO (Humanistic Centre for Education and Ubring) training.
- The trainer/co-coordinator is certified to work with the programme. Valuable communications with children.

Product Going out together

Target group

Mothers, just getting home after being released from prison or taking part in a PP-programme*. The mothers report to the co-ordinator of Family in Balance via a co-worker of the penitentiary.

Targets

- Restoring the relation between mother and child is put in motion.
- The self-confidence of the mother in her roll as up bringer has increased.
- The mother has new energy to elaborate on her roll as up bringer.

Duration and frequency

Maximum two weekends.

Setting

The mother and her family with a volunteer. On a holiday park in the Netherlands

Workmethod/activities

The mother and the volunteer of Family in Balance together, organize a weekend outing for the mother and her family. Together they make a programme to fill in the weekend. The volunteer offers support out of an equal relationship. She helps and accompanies the family during the weekend.

Additional information

- The weekends are, as soon as possible, dedicated for the benefit of the children.

Limiting conditions

- Familiarity with the offer "Going out together" by co-workers and offenders in the penitentiary.
- Availability of volunteers by means of work-discussions and group-meetings.

* PP = A penitentiary programme. This is a programme of coherent activities, which are focused on social resettlement. Participants in a penitentiary programme stay outside the penitentiary during the last phase of the detention. Only offenders with a sentence of a year's minimum can be considered for a penitentiary programme. The programme can last for a maximum of six months.

Product Mother-companions

Targetgroup

Mothers being released from prison, with or without living-at-home children. If the mothers are still imprisoned, they report themselves to the co-ordinator of Family in Balance via a co-worker of the penitentiary. Once after being released from prison mothers can directly report to the co-ordinator of Family in Balance. Other departments, like municipalities, probation service and juvenile care; can also come forward with mothers.

Targets

- The self-confidence of the mother in her roll as up bringer is increased.
- The mother has acquired herself up bring skills to stand up to the actual problems; perceptible behaviour changes have occurred.
- The client can fall back on a supporting network.

Duration and frequency

On average four hours a week during one till a maximum of 1,5 years.

Setting

The mother-companion visits the ex-imprisoned mother at home.

Workmethod/activities

The co-ordinator of Family in Balance carries on an interview to make his acquaintance with the imprisoned mother. The basic backgrounds and interests bring about a link between the imprisoned mother and a volunteer, the mother-companion.

The co-ordinator stays in contact with the ex-imprisoned mother, her mother-companion and with the relevant resources. If the situation in the family hasn't improved sufficiently, the co-ordinator, in consultation with the family, provides for a reference.

The essence of this product is the men- to- men contact: an equal relationship improving the self-respect of the ex-imprisoned mother. During visits a great number of subjects can come up for consideration, for instance around the family, up bring and networking. The mother-companions support the ex-imprisoned mothers by filling in their mother roll, anew. They give emotional support and emphasize the positive sides of the family. They strengthen the self-confidence of the mother and offer up bring support. Besides they support the strengthening of the social network around the family and offer support in practical matters.

Additional information

- The volunteer's signal, if the ex-imprisoned mother needs extra protection or supervision.
- The co-ordinator monitors and filters the necessity of additional care and provides for a good reference for needed help.

Limiting conditions

- Familiarity with the offer of mother-companions with the co-workers and offenders in the penitentiary.
- Availability of trainers.
- Support by volunteers by means of work-discussions and group-meetings.
- A network in the local infrastructure.

Product Living in Balance

Target group

Ex-imprisoned mothers who make use of the product mother-companions and who don't have independent accommodation. The mothers have to be able to manage a household with limited supervision without causing inconvenience or unsafe situations. Participants are reported to the housing adviser of Family in Balance by the co-ordinator of Family in Balance.

Targets

- There is a safe and stable living situation being realized for the mother and her children.
- The mother lives in the house as a "good tenant" and can remain in the house at the end of the house-supervising agreement.

Duration and frequency

One year, with at least six inspection moments. The ultimate total number of discussions is highly dependent on the independence of the mother and the housing situation in the chosen municipality.

Setting

Individual discussions with the mother. Contact with housing corporations and the municipality.

Workmethod/activities

The housing adviser of Family in Balance discusses, in which place the mother wants to settle and what are the reasons for her choice. Dependent on the possibilities, within the municipality concerned, the mother and the housing adviser attempt activities to obtain accommodation.:

1. Via the regular system. The housing adviser supports the mother by responding to accommodation and/or an urgency-request.
2. Via a special leasing out. It isn't possible to obtain accommodation via the regular system, the housing adviser approaches the municipalities and/or housing-corporation to come to a special lease out. Humanitas rents a house and leases it out by means of a housing-supervision contract to the mother. After, a with the corporation agreed on period, the situation is evaluated and the mother gets as soon as possible a regular housing contract.

If the mother has obtained accommodation the adviser inspects and supports the mother in shaping her own housing situation. Concrete activities are:

- Informing about and support by finding a meaningful day programme and to obtain as soon as possible an income after being released from prison.
- Informing about and support by obtaining means to furnish the house.
- Conduct a stringent rent administration and meet housing payments.
- Six inspections in a year, in the course of which possible annoying situations are observed.

Additional information

- To be considered for this module the mothers mustn't have insolvable debts, to master Dutch sufficiently and preferably having managed a household before.
- The application must be, preferably, at least three months before being released from prison.

Limiting conditions

- Familiarity with the offer of the housing adviser by co-workers and offenders in the penitentiary.
- Willingness of the municipality where the mother wants to settle and/or willingness of a housing corporation in that municipality to collaborate.



Enclosure 1 Humanitas

Humanitas advocates a society where there is room for everyone and where people take responsibility for themselves and others. Humanitas renders services in the area of living, care and welfare to, in particular, those who (temporarily) need support to shape their own life in their own way. The care is characterized by mutual respect, equality and reciprocity.

Humanitas signals social needs and takes initiatives to develop a renewed and accessible offer of activities. This can differ per place. Humanitas employs thousands of volunteers and professional workers nation wide. Both have, through their specific contribution, their own self-esteem.



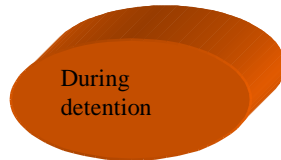
Enclosure 2 Case Family in Balance

Mrs. M. remains in the Remand House. She has been reported to the co-ordinator of Family in Balance by a co-worker of the social services department on her wing. M. has a daughter, 13 years of age, and living prior to her detention with her mother. M. says that she has taken the blame for a crime that her mother has committed, so that her sick mother could go back to the Antilles. M. has some regrets, because she notices that her daughter has many difficulties with the fact that she isn't there. Her daughter feels abandoned and has the feeling that M. has chosen for her mother and not for her. M. says that she hasn't thought about it well enough and feels guilty. She wants to care for her daughter the best she can, but now she cannot do that. She tells me that she has no idea how to go about it. She doesn't have the feeling that she can improve the relation with her daughter now she is imprisoned. She would like to get a hold how to go about it.

M. will participate in a course Me-You-We with the approval of the co-worker of the Remand House. During the course M. will be taught how to cope with her feelings of guilt towards her daughter. She wants to learn how to conduct a conversation with her daughter about their feelings and how she can listen to her daughter without forcing her own opinion. She also wants to learn to know her qualities, so that she can be an example for her daughter. During the training M. tells about the telephone conversations with her daughter. Her daughter has problems at school and shows aggressive behaviour. M. is worried. M. repeats the telephone conversations many times in a roll play. By playing the different attitudes M. can assume, she notices how she can influence a telephone conversation in a positive way. M. finds out that she doesn't listen to her daughter and fills the telephone conversation with shouting and anger out of helplessness. By practising the different listening techniques M. learns how to listen. After two weeks M. says, that she is able to listen calm to the story of her daughter. She slowly finds out what is keeping her daughter occupied and what her problem is. Now she can address the real problem in stead of expressing her own helplessness. The telephone conversations pass of quietly and M. has the feeling that she can exert a positive influence on the problems of her child. This gives her self-confidence, also as a mother.

M. is presented to the programme Living in Balance. Direct Living succeeded to arrange a house for M. and her daughter, after her release from prison. M. is very motivated to do things differently and seizes upon all possibilities. She indicates that, by what she has learned in the I-You-We training and the support of Family in Balance, she has regained confidence to be active in rebuilding her life after being released from prison. In the meantime M. is linked with a mother-companion, the accommodation is pleasant and her financial situation stable. She works with full confidence, actively, at her own future, together with her daughter.

Enclosure 3 Flow chart Family in Balance

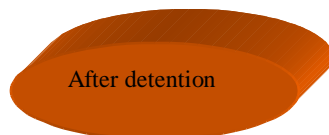


Family in Balance:
Start of detention: **Mother Goose**
During detention: **Visit mothers**
End of detention: **Me-You-We**
Material: childbooks, diary

Application clients from penitentiaries for women

3 months before end of imprisonment
Family in Balance:
Intake/inventory:

- Focuses on offer of Family in Balance after imprisonment
- Possible commitment by partners (f.i. education and employment)



Family in Balance:

- Mother-companions
- Going out together
- Living in Balance
- Material Family in Balance: child books, budget-play

Co-operating Partners:
Co-operation with relevant organisations in the local area: municipalities, bureau juvenile care, probation , housing corporations a .o.

Enclosure 4 Literature list

- **Blom.B. e.o.(2003)** *Gender-Responsive strategies, Practice and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders*, **National Institute of Corrections**.
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Utrecht: Verwey Jonker Institute.
- **Hermanns.J.(2001)** *Kijken naar opvoeding. Opstellen over jeugd, jeugdbeleid en jeugdzorg* Amsterdam: Uitgeverij SWP
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