

ACCIÓN FAMILIAR

ACTIVITY REPORT
2012



Acción Familiar



Activity Report 2012

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

As a result of our studies and working with families on a daily basis, we have been able to confirm how best to attend to their needs, and become aware of further challenges that we shall continue to address.

We know how much interest parents have in their children's education, and that they sometimes feel unsure as to what steps to take when faced with a difficult social environment. This confirms to us the usefulness of the family development tools which Acción Familiar has provided for decades. We work with young people and adolescents – who are full of information but lacking knowledge - in order to teach them how to know what is best for them and aid their overall development. Considering the essential role teachers play, we help them in a similar way through the programmes we offer, which are updated annually to respond to new challenges.

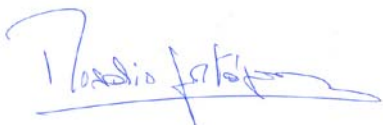
We provide psychological and legal aid through our Support Unit (UNIFAM) to all those families who require it. We do this by trying to involve the immediate members of family, making them realize they belong to that group, which is essential for emotional wellbeing. We continue with our volunteers, especially those who work with children, due to the good results achieved: a reduction in academic failure at school and improved effectiveness.

However, we must bear in mind that social and economic changes have forced grandparents to take on responsibilities which they had supposedly passed on to their children. Many are therefore acting as mothers and fathers to their grandchildren and, when it comes to offering help, they feel forever doomed to failure. They consequently require tailored support which reminds them of their real role.

Facilitating access to our programmes is hugely important and so we also offer them online. This has in turn led us to make changes to our website, which will include new features we hope will be of use. We have also intensified study and research through our Chair at the Complutense University of Madrid, which has been renewed for five years.

In order to simplify administration and increase efficiency, from 2013 onwards we will be working as one sole organization named Acción Familiar, because the most important aspect of our organization is not its legal structure, but the work we undertake to help families.

We hope to continue improving our activities with your support, because we can only achieve a stable society with strong families.



Warmest wishes and thanks,

Rosario de Gortázar e Ybarra

WHO WE ARE

An independent organization which has worked on behalf of families since 1978

The aim of Acción Familiar is to promote recognition and assessment of the essential role that family plays in society.

It works to help families function as they should, and consequently build a society with a solid and stable future. Sustained economic growth is only possible if there is social cohesion and, in order to achieve this, the institution of family is invaluable.

Throughout 2012, the Acción Familiar group has carried out its work via two legally distinct bodies – the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and the Foundation – and their coexistence has allowed a great synergy to flow between the two. We are the only group which works for families by using complementary strategies: the direct action which the NGO has carried out since 1978, plus the research and studies that the Foundation has undertaken since its inception in December 2002. As of January 2013, in order to simplify management and join forces – something which is especially necessary in the current climate – all their activities will now be executed through one sole organization.

AFA was awarded Consultative Status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2002, and this title is periodically renewed after our activities have been positively assessed externally.

Committed to personal dignity and supporting families indiscriminately

The mission of AFA is to promote, support and strengthen the family unit. To this end it offers services which help it to function successfully. Through knowledge and research, it compiles studies which support the fact that a family which functions well has a massive impact on personal and social wellbeing.

Our work is based on clear, well-defined values – personal dignity; a commitment to families, especially to those which are most disadvantaged; complete impartiality (we are non-denominational and politically neutral); to provide support without any discrimination on the grounds of religion, gender or race; to be coherent, transparent, ethical and strive for quality in our management, something that demands utmost professionalism; to be rigorous and efficient in the continual search for improvement, innovation and excellence; confidentiality and protection of information.



We work directly with families, all the while studying their needs and potential for help

- We provide training programmes via our own network of monitors.
- We offer direct help thanks to our volunteers.
- We give psychological, legal and educational support through our Family Guidance service and Family Intervention Unit (UNIFAM).
- We make the development of research projects and studies possible for the Complutense University of Madrid-Acción Familiar Honorary Chair in Family Policy.
- We participate in congresses and seminars in order to share the results of our work.
- We offer support and advisory services to public and private organizations which need to deepen their knowledge about the family unit.



Main activities completed in 2012:

1. Setting up two new training programmes – EDUCA + and AULAFAMI for immigrant families.
2. Developing the Family Intervention Unit (UNIFAM).
3. Delivering 120 training courses with over 2000 attendees – mothers, fathers, educators and young people.
4. Coordinating the work of our 120 volunteers across different areas.
5. Providing training courses for our monitors and volunteers.
6. Supplying personalized service to over 1400 families through our Family Guidance service.
7. Publishing reports which gathered together the results of our research.
8. Participating in numerous congresses and seminars, as well as appearing on radio and television programmes.
9. Offering support and advice, with work undertaken on behalf of various public and private institutions.
10. Growing presence of our activities and their results in the media.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The objectives set for 2012 were based around five points of action:

1. Respond to the new demands that families and educators face in the educational process.
2. Offer help, specifically to those groups with particular difficulties – immigrants, pregnant women, children and adolescents who are at a disadvantage in the educational system and/or at risk of social exclusion.
3. Offer help to families through guidance, information and psychological and legal support.
4. Give support to both older people and young residents at children's homes in the autonomous community of Madrid.
5. Provide relevant politicians, organizations and society in general with solid and well-researched studies which help to place the family at the centre of public and private decisions.



Methods used:

1. New training programmes:
 - Educa +
 - For immigrant families
 - Prevention through informal education
2. Ongoing programmes:
 - Family and Promoting Health
 - Educating as a Family
 - Living Together Better as a Family
 - Family Free Time: More Opportunities for Learning
3. Volunteers
4. Guidance Service:
 - Family Guidance Centre
 - Family Intervention Unit (UNIFAM)
 - Assistance and support for pregnant youngsters (EMJOVE)
5. Research and studies:
 - Honorary Chair in Family Policy (Complutense University of Madrid-Accion Familiar)
 - Publications
 - Participation in congresses and seminars

Educa +

Holistic support for children who, due to social factors at home and economic conditions, are disadvantaged and/or excluded from the educational system, as well as society in general. In order to achieve this, in 2011 Acción Familiar Aragon started to develop complementary activities with educational centres where our programmes were already being offered.

During the course of 2012, we have widened this initiative to cover Madrid and Murcia after seeing the real need for educational compensation for children.

The Ministry of Education has co-financed this project.



Preventing academic failure and risk-taking behaviour in underprivileged environments.

This program is carried out in a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Cartagena, Murcia, with the aim of providing the children there with the necessary support to improve their performance at school, their quality of life, and their options for breaking into the working world.

Aulafami

The goal of this project is to encourage the participation of immigrant families in the educational process of their children.

Back in 2008, Acción Familiar discovered through its research activity the need to work with these families. Our collaboration minimizes the problems they face in adapting to their new life, overcoming difficulties and being able to offer practical help to their children when it comes to learning.

There are two very common issues which must be dealt with:

- Children with more ability and power than their parents in the new cultural environment, which can lead to communication difficulties as both sides are going through different experiences.
- The disparity of opportunities, due to the value of effort in education being lost.

This type of project increases sensitivity by opening up the education community, facilitating participation and speeding up the process of social integration.

Thirty-six training activities have begun for immigrant mothers and fathers, after which a report will be produced.

Understanding the level of wellbeing or the problems that affect them is not only fundamental in offering solutions, but also when measuring the extent of social cohesion in a country. This new proposal by Acción Familiar responds to the priorities and objectives set out in the General Programme 'Solidarity and the Management of Migration Flows (Plan 2012)', as produced by the Directorate General for Immigration and Emigration at the Ministry of Employment and Social Security.

- **EDUCATING AS A FAMILY:** Provides mothers and fathers with the teaching tools to manage family dynamics.
- **FAMILY AND PROMOTING HEALTH:** Offers the knowledge required to start children off with healthy habits.
- **LIVING TOGETHER BETTER AS A FAMILY:** This is specifically aimed at parents with teenagers, an age when new risk factors emerge.
- **FAMILY FREE TIME:** More Opportunities for Learning: Emphasizes the importance and benefits of taking advantage of free time for learning..
- **MOTHER TO MOTHER:** Communication workshops for social integration.
- **SHARED TUTORIALS:** Preventing drug addiction with the collaboration of teaching staff. This approach is used by our Murcia branch to cover the subject as broadly as possible. The project spans 19 educational centres in Cartagena..
- **TELEPATIO:** Extracurricular scheme offering creative leisure time at centres in areas with few resources.

Resultados

The 120 courses delivered by 41 monitors have benefited 2213 people

Centres where courses are offered:

- 25 state schools and institutions
- 18 Semi-private institutions
- 2 private centres
- 10 Infant schools
- 4 Associations
- 2 Town halls
- 1 Penitentiary centre
- 1 Community meeting point
- 1 Cooperative
- 2 Parishes

A total of 40 immigrant mothers have attended.

116 shared tutorials, through which 115 teachers and 1857 students have been trained.

45 children from the disadvantaged neighbourhood of Lo Campano in Cartagena have received educational reinforcement, together with complementary and leisure activities.

14 video workshops, in which 189 students have participated.

70% of the centres continue to request our courses, year after year.



VOLUNTEERS. METHODS AND RESULTS

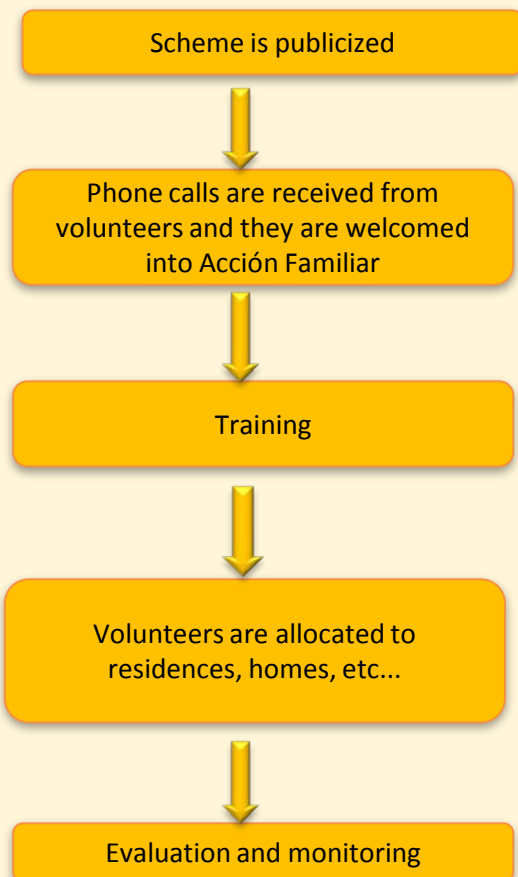
Thanks to the excellent work of our volunteers, we can attend to the various needs of children who live in children's homes and centres in the autonomous community of Madrid.

Through their immediate contact and the work they carry out, their guardians and educators spot and tell us about requirements which, due to their family circumstances, have not been met since the early stages of the children's lives.

We also have a buddy programme for older people in residences or their own homes, offering them support and company for a few hours each week.



Volunteers pass through a rigorous process which assesses their strengths, eventually being offered a role which suits their profile, motivation and availability.



VOLUNTEERS. METHODS AND RESULTS

Our ongoing volunteer work with children has helped them integrate into a more normal way of life of better quality. It includes participating in leisure and recreational activities, forming relationships and sharing experiences with their peers.

Furthermore, it has been reported that those children who have enjoyed the support of volunteers have adopted the study techniques and tools which they have been exposed to every day. This is in addition to essential values such as hard work and consistency, which have yielded better academic results.

A total of 66 volunteers for AFA have received the basic training required to get started in this activity.

Those in charge of the centres and residences have voiced their satisfaction. They believe the work of the volunteers to be essential for carrying out certain activities with the children – activities which would be impossible without their help.



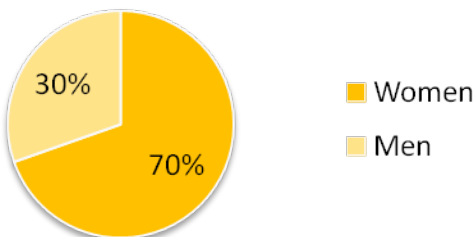
Acción Familiar has over 120 volunteers in 19 children's centres and 2 residences for the elderly. 30% of the volunteers remain committed to Acción Familiar and are happy to continue their work.

GUIDANCE SERVICE

We offer direct assistance to families - some of which are in extremely vulnerable circumstances - through information, guidance and psychological and legal advice.

Guidance is supplied to all those who request it, without any discrimination, via a speedy and personalized point of contact. Our professionals listen, commit themselves, study the problem and give advice. The emphasis is placed on building self-esteem so that users can collaborate more efficiently to reach possible solutions.

Users of the service



ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR PREGNANT YOUNGSTERS

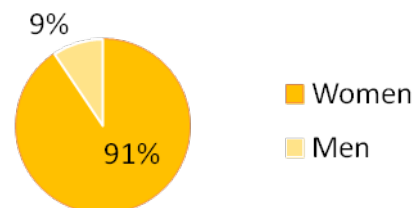
Many young women come to AFA in search of help and advice when faced with this situation.

They feel disoriented and frightened, not knowing how to deal with the generally new and unknown situation in which they find themselves. They are gripped by loneliness, without anyone to share their fears with. This may be because they have been abandoned or disowned by family members, and lack sufficient economic and social resources to cope with the birth of a child and offer them a future.

With the EMJOVE service, we offer the following:

- Psychological and/or legal advice, both for the mother-to-be and the prospective father, or other family members who require it.
- Information about the resources available to cope with the needs that arise in these situations and possible referrals to centres or refuges.
- Support online and by telephone for those who are unable to visit the centre.

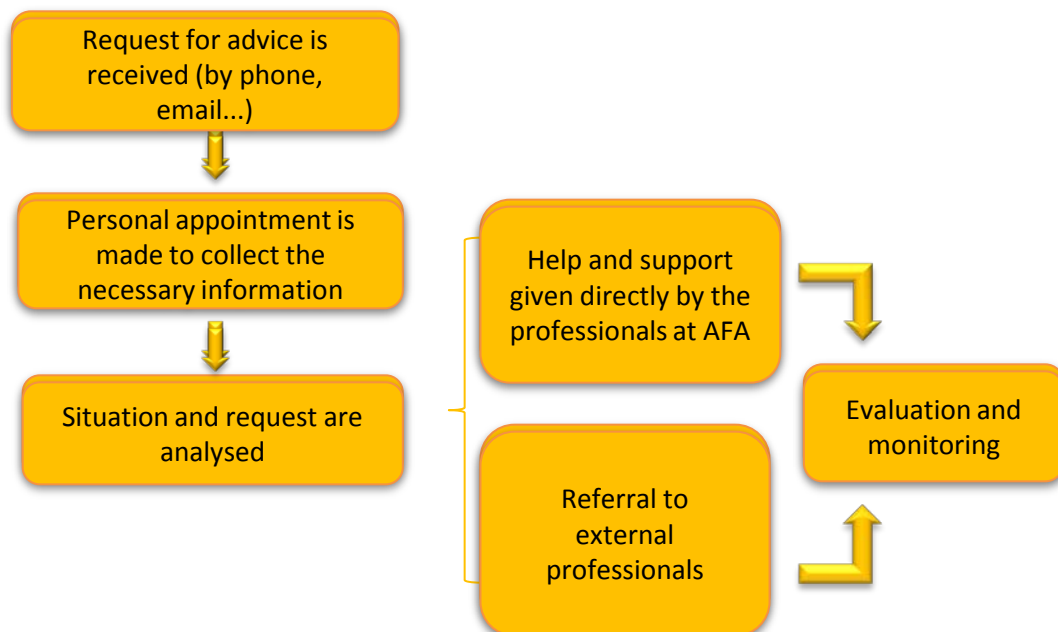
Users of EMJOVE



FAMILY INTERVENTION UNIT (UNIFAM)

After more than two decades attending to the problems that families have, we have gone one step further in the help that we offer them by starting up a new Support Unit. It is a space which, besides guiding families on how to cope with the conflicts that arise when living together, also provides them with tips which allow them to resolve those issues. The Family Intervention Unit (UNIFAM) has been up and running since the last quarter of 2012, and involves a team of professionals with various specialities (psychologists, experts in childhood and adolescence, educators, mediators, solicitors who work in family law and employment rights, etc.) who work in a coordinated way.

The procedure implemented in the Family Guidance Service can be summarised in the following chart:



In order to guarantee maximum quality in the programmes and services offered, Acción Familiar closely monitors the whole process. The team includes staff from the organization itself, as well as external advisors who are experts in law, management, family mediation and psychology.

RESULTS

There are various factors which contribute to a build-up of stress and tension, such as becoming unemployed, worrying about not being able to raise and educate children, expectations being dashed, and in many cases changes in the role of each family member. When not channelled correctly, this anxiety can spark serious conflicts, both within marriages and in the relationships between parents and children.

At Acción Familiar, we have learned that a large majority of mothers and fathers lack the guidelines and suitable, efficient tools to deal with the friction and problems they have with their children on a daily basis. Therefore, it has been deemed necessary to offer them adequate measures to tackle each issue, and teach various family members how to use them. In many cases, this will prevent disagreements, fights and the risk of the family core being destabilized.

Since UNIFAM was set up, over a hundred families have contacted us to ask for help in resolving or alleviating their problems and conflicts. Many of these issues derive from personal factors and lack of knowledge and communication, which is worsened by the precarious economic situation mentioned previously.

The reasons for seeking advice have varied from difficulties in personal relationships, domestic violence, anxiety family mediation, self-esteem issues, problems between partners, separation and divorce, information about adoption and fostering, to legal advice relating to family and employment law, legalization and immigration matters, young pregnant women without resources, and financial aid.

Another significant point is that of immigrants who sought our help to legalize their stay in Spain. Having achieved that, they are now coming back to us to find out how to go about returning to their country of origin.

One year on, the results have been very positive. This is not only measured by the resolution of conflicts, the level of satisfaction in the sessions and the legal and psychological advice given, but also by the feedback and warm response received by each of the professionals on the team. This brilliant indication lies in them responding to the demands and needs of each user as quickly as possible.

Over the course of 2012 we have continued to work on developing projects and studies through the Honorary Chair in Family Policy, and alongside the Research Group it finances in collaboration with the Complutense University of Madrid.

As a result of these projects, various publications have had a significant social impact via the media.



Results of the Publications

- “Analysis of the Social Policies in the General State Budgets for 2012 from the Perspective of Families.” AFA document 01/12. The results were presented to a group of parliament members at an informal session, with the goal of offering proposals so as to create a definite Family Policy.
- “Analysis of the IRPF from the perspective of families. Proposals for reform.” Published in the Acción Familiar Collection.
- Article in the journal Familia, issue number 45, July 2012, entitled “Family policies and care in infancy: Who cares for infants under three in the European Union, and how is it done?” This publication specializes in family matters, and is evaluated and edited at the Pontifical University of Salamanca.

Since 2004, Acción Familiar has maintained a Collaboration Agreement with the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM), and hence the creation of the Honorary Chair in Family Policy. The aim of this position is to promote the study of the reality, problems and perspectives of those policies, while focusing on research and education. Since its creation, this post has been generously financed by the Gondra-Barandiarán Foundation.

During the academic year 2010-2011, the course “Public Policy and Family” continued to be delivered as an optional subject worth 6 credits (60 hours) to two groups, as in previous years. The anonymous feedback from students reveals that they thought the course was extremely worthwhile, thanks to both those who teach the course and the material. As 2011 drew to a close and the academic year 2011-12 got underway, the course was provided to just one group. This reduction in number is due to the launch of the new Bologna Process, which does not feature optional subjects.

Other results

One of the main objectives throughout 2012 has been raising awareness about the results of research carried out by Acción Familiar among those who study and work for families, and our participation in congresses, seminars, conferences, etc., has been key. Our findings have been presented to various different groups - academics, businesspeople, etc. Below are the main events in which we have participated during 2012:

- Attendance at the IV Conference on Positive Parenting (Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality) in Madrid, October 2012.
- Participation in the XLI Social Week of Spain, “Europe: An inspiring project?” at the Caja Cantabria Cultural Centre, Santander, April 2012.
- Attendance at the Conference “The Vision for Equilibrium in the 21st century: Guaranteeing the Balance between Work and Family” at the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality in Madrid, June 2012.
- Keynote speech “The Roles of Family and Public Policy in a society in crisis” at the Conference “Large families in a society in crisis”, Cadiz, 22 June 2012.
- Conference at the International University of Catalonia, at the Institute for Advanced Family Studies, entitled “Work-Life Balance: A Challenge for the Education of Children.” Barcelona, 20 October 2012.



VISITS TO OUR WEBSITE

The Acción Familiar website is the association's digital window to the world, sharing its work on behalf of families.

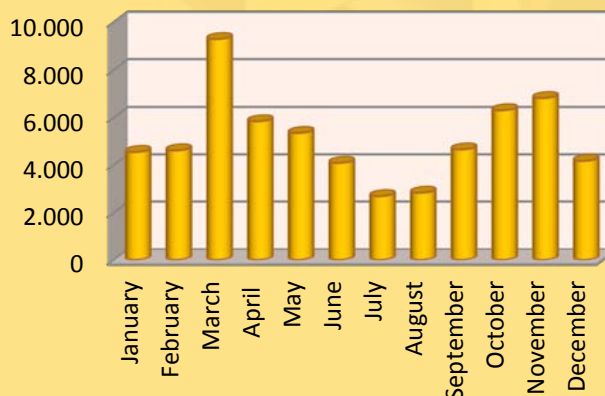
The site contains everything related to the organization: our history, programmes, projects, the various forms of help that we provide, as well as the benefits for those who decide to support our work.

The sections which attract the most interest from visitors are:

- Volunteers
- Training
- Guidance Service
- Programmes: Educating as a Family and Living Together Better as a Family

The Acción Familiar homepage received a total of 61.108 hits in 2012

WEBSITE VISIT 2012

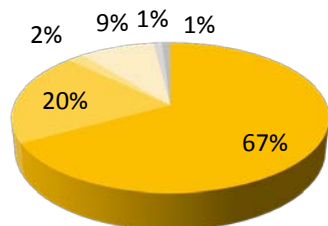


Users by location:

The number of countries which visit our website has increased to 73 in 2012, compared to 68 countries in 2011. In 2012 the percentage of visits from Spain has fallen overall (78% of visits were from Spain in 2011, and 66% in 2012), and visits from other areas have increased (20% from South America, and 9% from Central America).

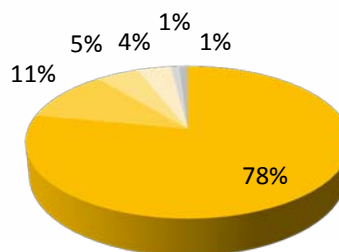
In Spain, Madrid is the city from which we received the most hits (51%), followed by Barcelona, Bilbao and La Coruña.

Visits 2012



- Spain
- South America
- Europe
- Central America
- North America
- Asia/Africa/Caribbean

Visits 2011



- Spain
- South America
- Central America
- Europe
- North America
- Asia/Africa/Caribbean

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Gta. Quevedo, 7 - 6º dcha. -28015 Madrid
Tfno.: 91 446 10 11 - Fax: 91 446 88 17
web: www.accionfamiliar.es