

SEARCH FOR EUROPEAN PARTNERS

European Exchanges on Family Group Conferencing (FGC)

ERASMUS + PROGRAMME

Key action 2 – Strategic partnership in adult education
Exchange of good practices

2017-2019 (24 months)

Context

Gironde County Council is a French local authority with a population of 1,505,517, in charge of delivering a variety of public services. One of its main missions is social work. The role of social work and its forms of action are closely linked to changes in the society in which the local authority intervenes. The impact of the economic crisis, an ageing population, increasing precariousness and the disintegration of social ties are all factors that raise questions as to the professional practice of the authority's social workers.

For several years, Gironde County Council has been seeking to help its social workers renew and diversify their approaches, and to support the people they are in contact with. To this effect, it has turned to traditional methods such as training courses and analysing practices, and has also opened up to operating approaches used by professional counterparts in other countries.

This project is part of a broader process of "rethinking social work" which started several years ago. Gironde County Council previously conducted two European projects between 2011 and 2013 on the themes of the "Empowerment" (LEONARDO European programme) and "Social, Arts and Culture" (GRUNDTVIG European programme).

About the project

The "Family Group Conferencing" project aims to explore new ways of intervening in social work, based on the empowerment of inhabitants. Changing professional practices in social work and fostering user participation is a key challenge for Gironde County Council which aims to provide local people who contact social services with methods to promote their participation and give them a position as an actor in decisions on their life plans, with the help of social workers.

Derived from the traditional practices of Maori society, "Family Group Conferencing" started in New Zealand in the 1990s and has gradually developed worldwide: Australia, Canada, South Africa, USA and Europe where there are currently 14 countries interested in this method. So far, the concept remains little known in France.

Through this European project, the aim is to explore and exchange on this innovative practice in order to strengthen and complete a range of intervention methods and make them accessible to social workers.

Gironde County Council has already started raising awareness of "Family Group Conferencing" (FGC) among 113 social workers who were volunteers, and proposed specific training for 10 professionals who are likely to steer and test this method as coordinators. The first experimentation phase will be implemented in the 1st half of 2017 in a test area: raising awareness of "Family Group Conferencing" among all the social workers in the territory and conducting conferencing experiments.

The ERASMUS+ project will enrich and complement this experiment thanks to exchanges with European partners.

Aims of the project

The main aims of the project are:

- To exchange experiences and good practice in "Family Group Conferencing" through training sessions with European partners who have been practicing it for several years, and pose the following questions:
 - o What are the different practices to date?
 - o What is the social worker's role in the conferences, can it evolve?
 - o What are the social problems that can be addressed in the conferences (child protection, housing, integration...) and how are they dealt with?
- To communicate, disseminate and develop this method to support the participation of families and individuals in France and Europe.
- To renew professional practices that foster the participation of people in social work.

These objectives are lines of work that may evolve in consultation with interested European partners.

ERASMUS+ co-funding

The aim is to develop the project in response to the 2017 call for projects of the "ERASMUS + Key action 2 – "Strategic partnership in the exchange of good practices" European Programme which closes on 29 March 2017.

Project's implementation

If it is selected by the ERASMUS+ National Agency, the project will run from September 2017 to May 2019. It will consist of organising mobility in the form of exchange periods and training in FGC good practice in transnational sessions in the project's partner countries.

European partner typology

Gironde County Council (France), the project's lead partner, is looking for 2 to 3 European partners wanting to get involved in this innovative project and already having experience of the "Family Group Conferencing" method.

The partners we are looking for are:

- local authorities
- associations
- foundations
- ...

The interested partners will have the possibility to contribute to writing the ERASMUS+ Programme application which will be submitted by Gironde County Council.

Contacts – Gironde County Council

If you are interested or have any additional questions:

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PLEASE RESPOND BEFORE JANUARY 30th, 2017