



**CENTRO NAZIONALE PER IL VOLONTARIATO**  
**Studi ricerche e collegamento fra le Associazioni**

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## ***TWO MINDS***

### **Objectives**

The project intends to develop and adapt a training package created in a previous Daphne programme, which was coordinated by us together with 3 partners from new admitted countries (Lithuania, Latvia and Slovenia). The latter training package is based on the promotion of good family mediation practice monitored and developed with two previous Daphne projects coordinated by us in six other European Union countries (Italy, Germany, Spain, Bulgaria, Greece, Belgium) and in collaboration with European family mediation networks (European Forum of Family Mediators ...). The project, which refers to family mediation seen as a tool to prevent and manage family conflicts, in which children can become the primary victims of violence, intends to favour capacity building and the sharing of experiences which promote positive parental skills, encouraging nonviolent relationships in the family. The ultimate beneficiaries of the project are the children of families which are at risk because of high conflictual levels in the couple, including cases of separation and divorce. The training package is for family mediators, but we intend to develop it in order to address it also to public employees (teachers, social workers, and representatives of institutions) and to the third sector (all of whom deal with the family, and violence on minors), in order for them to promote specific initiatives for parents of families experiencing a crisis caused by internal conflict or "external" reasons, such as separations due to migration processes especially from Eastern European countries. In the last Daphne project conducted by us (MIND) what emerged was the importance of reinforcing parental skills (and not only the latter) through mediation, in families which break up because of migration processes involving one or both parents, and thus leaving the children without the latter.

### **The problem**

Violence towards minors is carried out especially in the presence of conflictual family contests, in which the relationship between the parents is characterized by



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difficulties such as mutual understanding and trust. The latter is also reflected in their parental roles, in particular when the conjugal relationship is interrupted. In Europe today there is on average one divorce every three marriages celebrated; and the average duration of a marriage is 12 years. There are however considerable differences between the different countries: in northern Europe there are nations with more than 50 divorces every 100 marriages, while in the Mediterranean area there are 20 every 100 marriages, a number which is constantly increasing in the last few years. In Eastern Europe the data are very different: there are areas where divorces are double the European average, such as Lithuania, and others in which the percentages are almost the same, such as Slovenia. If we consider "separations", in Italy we had, in 2002, double the amount compared to '85. But these numbers are much higher today if we consider common-law couples. The latter are on the increase in Europe. As are common-law separations, due to phenomena linked to migration, which are difficult to quantify until the separation or the divorce have been made official.

In Europe it is estimated that there are over a million children involved in families which have broken up.

***Along with the increasing number of conjugal break-ups in Europe, the problem of children in divided families without an identity is also increasing; the latter are often contested, sometimes unaware shields in conflicts between spouses, often ignored, neglected, ill-treated, often helpless spectators of violence between parents or against themselves, yearning for a new balance in their life in which they are no more the centre of attention and of cohesion in the family.***

For this reason it is important to learn how to manage conflicts: to avoid suffering and forms of violence which then become incurable, starting with conflicts which see children as the primary (often unaware) victims. Neglected or abandoned children (who are increasing also in families in which one or both parents migrate to a far away country) are indeed more and more at risk of violence carried out by other individuals.



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### **The proposal**

If intended not so much as a procedure to come to a separation or a divorce agreement in a short period of time, but more as the pursuit of a constructive dialogue between the parents, in order for them to remain such even when their conjugal relationship is broken, family mediation constitutes an effective answer (80% of cases treated have been evaluated as successful) in order to prevent and manage the rise of violence expressed in conflictual family relationships, so that parents do not mutually destroy their children's image of good parents, helping them instead to safeguard and reinforce their parental skills, beyond the event of separation and divorce, and beyond the conflicts that separate them.

All this can also be carried out with preventive training actions and interventions.

### **The methodology**

#### Phase 1

We intend to organize an international seminar with the partners of all the countries in which the CNV has coordinated Daphne projects on the theme of family mediation, in which

Information will be exchanged on the activities carried out, on good practice developed in the different countries on the theme of FM, intended as a phase of a larger and longer path that leads to good parenting, beyond separation and divorce

Indicators of identification of good practice will also be verified together

The characteristics of a basic training package, which will focus on the skills necessary to develop good FM practice to prevent violence in family conflicts and develop "good parenting skills" will be redefined, also in the case of families which have broken up because of migration processes underway, thus rendering individuals more aware of the choices to be made.

#### Phase 2



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Seminars will be organized, open to employees from the public sector, from the private social sector, and to representatives of institutions in the partner countries, as well as focus groups to adapt the training packages to the specificities of each partner country and to promote the project, its objectives, and the feasibility of FM.

**Phase 3**

We intend to call for a public announcement for the partner countries in which to carry out our project, and through which to select 15 people to carry out the training course to be held at the CNV for family mediators, with a specific module devoted to reinforcing parents' confidence regarding their roles beyond their conflicts.

**Phase 4**

The training package will be created, on paper and on CD, complete with didactic material and evaluation systems, to be submitted for a final evaluation to contact groups of parents in the various partner countries.

**Phase 5**

We intend to organise a conclusive event with all the partners of the Daphne projects carried out on the theme of FM, in order to present the results of the project, evaluating them jointly and disseminating them in all the "new and old" 12 partner countries. All the coordinators of the Daphne projects pertaining to the theme of parenting will be invited.

**Partners of the project**

In Italy: Istituto degli Innocenti and Regione Toscana, SPES

In Europe: Centre Européen di Mediation and CEV

In new partner countries: Slovenia, Slovacchia, Irlanda, Lettonia, Romaniaia