

European Commission
General Directorate of Justice and External Affairs

DAPHNE PROGRAMME 2000-2003

PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR FIGHTING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN,
ADOLESCENTS AND WOMEN.

Proposal no 01/159

**FUNDING APPLICATION
2001**

DAPHNE 2001
FUNDING APPLICATION

1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLYING ORGANIZATION

1. Identity of the applying organization

Social purpose

Centre National for Volunteering Studi Ricerche e Collegamenti fra le Associazioni e i Gruppi

Abbreviated name

Centro Nazionale per il Volontariato

Acronym or initials

C.N.V.

2. DETAILS OF THE ACTIVITY TO BE FUNDED

A. Description of operation

1. Project Title

Ancora Matilde (More Matilda)

5. Summary

The aim is to advise on and prevent every form of violence against minors in cases of family disintegration through the use of family mediation (FM), addressed towards the interests of the children and carried out by social workers (public and private rather than through solicitors). The "Ancora Matilde" project is a continuation of the preceding. New partners will receive information about experiences obtained by "Matilde" and in particular will obtain a barchart showing types of violence sustained during family disintegration, the community norms in respect of FM, the different types of FM and the role of the voluntary sector in this field. At a later stage we will decide on how to promote and apply FM, both from legal and operational aspects, in those countries represented by our new partners. This will be carried out even in the most violent family situations where, however, it will still be possible to assert the right of equality of parenthood, both from the father's and from the mother's side. The relationship between schools and FM in Italy will be developed. Schoolchildren's and teachers' experiences with FM will be compiled into a book with their help. This book will also be published on the Internet. "Matilde" web pages will be updated. This material will be distributed in schools and social workers in the public and private sectors. The timescale for the project is one year.

6. The problem faced

Parental separation has frequent implications for the affective relationship parents have with their offspring. These implications can be set in a continuum which starts from anxieties of varying intensity (anxieties which may make a child feel isolated and socially excluded) and finishes with very real forms of mental and physical violence. The “Matilde” project is designed to face such experiences both in Italy and in partner countries. It looks at the norms involved, the social services called in to help and the role of the voluntary sector in respect of FM, which is taken to be seen as a possible alternative way of relating to a family which is breaking up. At the same time, there are many different ways in which FM can be defined and how it can be put into practice. But the major problem is that of a limited use of FM because it is normally used to reach an agreement between the parents and is not applied in respect of the child’s effective development of educational and other needs. Besides, FM is not very well known in the handling of the more extreme forms of family crisis or those couples at risk who need, all the more, to develop a programme of satisfactory separation as far as their children are concerned.

7. Answer supplied by the project

7.1 Specific objective of the project

Our objective is that of making more people aware of the role of FM, in particular that carried out by the voluntary sector and the social services, insofar as it is a valuable tool in the prevention of violence against minors and a help in defending for their rights and interests.

7.2 Background and preparation of the project

The project originated from the realisation of the usefulness of FM which had already been noted by the “Matilde” project, from the interest of institutions in the various Community countries and from the recent norms and directives issued by some countries (Greece). The partners (thanks to contact details supplied by the Dafne database) have all collaborated in helping to form its aims.

7.3 Beneficiaries of the Project

The project’s beneficiaries will be minors aged between 13 to 18 who could be targets of violence (psychological, emotional, denied rights and even physical violence) in situations of conflict or families breaking-up. Since the project wishes to give an input both for community institutions and for partner countries, both on the legislative and on the operational level (especially regarding the role of the voluntary sector and the social services) the number of beneficiaries cannot be forecast: indeed, we hope that the project will have an avalanche effect.

7.4 Target Group(s)

Voluntary associations, social services, teachers, lawyers, solicitors, legal institutions, community groups, partner-country institutions, parents, schools of FM

7.5 Project Participants.

Partner

- «Maison de la Famille». This centre is involved in helping families. It will benefit from the results and methodology of the old project, it will carry out research into good practice, it will network work, it will organise a focus group and a seminar.
- «ARSIS» is involved in helping young people in difficulty. It will implement the findings of the old project, carry out research into good practice, carry out work networking and organize a seminar.

- «European forum for research and development into family mediation». This is a centre of studies on mediation. It will be involved in research, the application of know-how from members who are not participating in the project and dissemination of the same.

Partners and associates eligible for financing

- «University of Pisa» teaching. Will carry out a comparison on various judicial situations for partners.
- «Centro Europeo del Volontariato» will evaluate the project and distribute it to its member.

Partners and associates not eligible for funding

- «SOS families in risk association» will give help to families in difficulty. Starting from the old project it will investigate the theme in question in Bulgaria, carry out lobbying and arrange a convention.

7.6 Other new elements

The project stems from the comparative analysis carried out during project Matilde. Studying European norms, norms of separate countries, from examples of good practice and from critical cases the tendency of applying mediation in easily administered conflicts has emerged and a logic of arbitration between couples. The new project wishes to favour the diffusion and the application of a new type of FM, through seminars and information directed to the groups in the various countries. This new type of mediation works not only on existing relationships or as a result of the application of a balance between rights and agreements reached between the couple but also from the viewpoint of reconstructing ties in order to allow the development and well-being of the children, taking into account their interests as “superiors”, because for their development it is not just necessary to be able to judge each partner in the conflictual situation but also to take into account a future which must be rebuilt. Greece, Bulgaria and Belgium at a first look seem to be able to offer some good points starting from very different situations. The first two, one an EC country the other an associate, are in the Balkan area and come into contact with very different situations. Furthermore, in Greece in July 2000 STE 160 of the European Convention entered into force regarding the rights of children, according to which children have the right to be informed and to express their own opinions, asking also the presence of a representative for them.

7.7 European added value

The again “Ancora Matilde” project aims at unifying experiences and forces in the various partner countries in order to face a common problem and also to standardise FM as practised by the voluntary sector. This is possible by working together and involving community organisations. The different areas come from very different cultures and bring with them specific knowledge. The presence of a body of international character (European Forum) allows one to enter into contact with knowledge from different countries who may not be part of the project and to be able to propagate such knowledge through their publications.

7.8 Foreseeable risks and difficulties

The first risks stem from the variety of partners, voluntary associations, local bodies etc. From cultural differences, different social contexts, different legal systems. Other derive from the interest FM arouses in various professions, like solicitors, lawyers, psychologists etc. There is thus a difficulty in being able to agree between these different approaches and there is often a conflict of interests as well.

7.9 Favourable external factors

The first is the interest taken in FM, towards the rights of young people, towards mediation in general as a technique. Conferences and research on FM is taking place right now. The second is that the material of FM is being developed and thus it is easier to influence different approaches and choices.

8. How will the project implemented?

8.1 Approach and methodology

Meeting between partners in the two Matilde and AgainMatilde projects for an initial distribution of results and methods with the implementation of a benchmarking system which will allow a comparison between different experiences. Seminars with brain-storming activities

8.2 Activities carried out and means used

1) Planning of activities and agreements for the first meeting between partners (including those not eligible for funding). This stage will be carried out by phone, email to and from the various member countries by administrative and research staff. 2) An investigation into various schools in north, central and south Italy will be carried out by using a questionnaire in order to find out the level of awareness and expectations of FM among teachers and pupils in upper and lower secondary schools. From this individual accounts of FM will be collated from schoolchildren, for schoolchildren. 3) The first focus group between partners (including those not eligible for funding) will be held at Lucca and will take place in part during the closing “Matilde” conference (the partners from the two projects will thus be able to meet each other) and in part in a separate meeting in order to define the project, its methodology, its scope and terms of reference and scale, its standards of excellence for specific practises and involvement and economic and administrative issues. Each partner will be represented by one person at the focus group with at least two from the CNV. 4) Formulation of the first research stage (norms and aims). The activity will be carried out in Bulgaria, Greece and Belgium through studies and researches according to the aims and objectives set down in Lucca. 5) Second focus group (Belgium). It will be related to the first stage of research and will initiate the second stage. Partners’ evaluation of the first stage (at least two good practices from each country) with the application of FM as developed by the Matilde viewpoint. 7) Development of rules to be supplied to the relevant authorities and workers in the sector. 8) Distribution of material as preparation for the forthcoming seminar. 9) First seminar in Greece on progress so far in the presence of the Greek target audience. 10). Publicising and distributing material to relevant authorities and workers. 11) development of material to be furnished to Bulgarian authorities and workers. Draft of the schoolchildren’s accounts of FM experiences. 12) Second seminar (in Bulgaria). Presentation of the book of schoolchildren’s accounts. Representatives of the target Bulgarian group will also be invited. 13) Development of the final material, this stage will be carried out for the most part by the coordinator. 14) Seminar at Brussels for final project evaluation, for the presentation of conclusions and for suggestions to the EC commissioners for Justice and internal affairs and also to target Belgian groups. 15) Final conference at Lucca. All partners, associates, representatives of target groups and schoolchildren from schools associated with the project. Further activities. Coordination and translation of all material into English. Publicizing the project through the WEB page, the development of the forum set up by Matilde. Evaluation of research by young persons.

8.3 Organisation, method of implementation

Every international partner must research in his own country as set down by the first seminar. Every partner will prepare materials and will let others know about his work. A focus group will be arranged between partners. This will meet twice and three seminars will take place (Greece, Bulgaria, Belgium) in addition to a final conference. The Italian CNV will coordinate the group and see to the completion of the final results, to the English translation and the publishing of the same. The partners' structure will be in the viewpoint of a balance between differences and integration. Specific tasks will be assigned to each partner outlining what has to be done (tasks) with whom (relationships) and why (objectives). The methodology will be an informal approach between group members as far as procedure, timetabling and methodology and responsibilities are concerned.

8.4 Timetable for implementation

See table C

8.5 Profile of person actually managing the project

Rossana Caselli, Sociology degree, research activity and development from 1973 in the public and private sectors with special reference to social exclusion. Worked with private companies and with colleagues of the department of sociology of Trento, Bergamo and Pisa. Now works with the CNV in its research department where she is coordinator. Has participated with the CNR in the conference of the role of the voluntary sector in the restructuring of welfare. Project coordinator of three projects. Has worked with Prof Corghi on the Matilde project (Dafne 2000). Has led seminars on social mediation and published some papers.

B. Expected results of the operation

1. Expected results

Forecast result consist in the realisation of a model of application and diffusion which, starting from a comparative research, proposes new models of social intervention in a european perspective. It also puts forwards a creation of a network of subjects on both the local and national levels (Matilde and AncoraMatilde) which can cooperate on a community level unifying the various professions and specialisations. It wil create an information manual which will give a new view of FM according to good practice. This will be published on the web. It will create a web page with on-line discussions on selected themes. It will connect to similar sites and will act as an exchange for ideas on the subject for interested persons. It will publish and distribute materials on FM to target workers during conferences and seminars. It will publish accounts of schoolchildren regarding their experience with FM and will distribute the same in countries which take an interest in this subject.

2. Use and distribution of results

Ecah partner will work in a network or will represent the organisations which will also be informed through normal channels of communication. There will also be regional committees, besides a web page. Methodologies will be distributed directly during the Brussels meeting to family mediators and to associations who are involved in this area, and to judges in juvenile courts.

3. Method of project evaluation

3.1 Internal supervision of project during implementation

The national centre has made an application to obtain certification according to ISO standards and the project will work along these lines. The participation of minors during this stage will allow one to see if good practice satisfy their expectations.

3.2 Evaluation

Evaluation will be carried out by a mixed committee (internal and external) made up of a representative for each partner, an expert in community politics and a representative from the European Centre for Voluntary organizations. The evaluation will be on-going as well as conclusive. A system of information for decision purposes will be created whose starting point for subsequent decisions will be the observations and conclusions derived from its activities. All committee representatives will be present at the Brussels seminar and also in part during implementation of the tasks. The mixed committe will be always brought up-to-date regarding project development and minutes of each meeting will be sent out. It will operate mainly through evaluation forms. Evaluation has to start from a premise of an on-going process of information gathering and from monitoring processes. Points which we feel are important to gauge the project's development are related to various aspects of the same. Indeed, we will examine the monitoring of the project's activities, its research and development of materials and the publicising of its international and focus group activities.

3.3 Durability and viability of results

Project follow-uo will be possible thanks to a forum created during Matilde between partners in the old and the new projects. This forum will be regularly updated and will also allow on-line discussion. The forum will be financed by the subject leader and by national partners. The partners will continue to collaborate on the theme during meetings of CVF of which they are all associate members.

Furthermore, the CNv will head seminars on the theme of mediation and the voluntary sector also with reference to new contexts such as prison mediation.

3.4 Visibility

Every published document during the project will accord with the DAFNE programme, During the final conference all those responsible for this sector will be invited to attend to discuss a larger specification of the DAFNE project.