



REPORT

MIND PROJECT MEETING IN LITHUANIA

1. Preparation for the seminar in Lithuania, invitation of the participants.

We started the preparation for the seminar at the beginning of October.

In the last meeting in Slovenia all partners agreed on organizing two meetings in Lithuania and Latvia in the same week to lower the travel expenses. The date of the project MIND meeting in Lithuania was agreed for 3rd and 4th of November.

During the last meeting in Slovenia, we have agreed that it is a good idea to start the seminar with short breakfast for all participants this helps to create comfortable atmosphere.

The first thing we concentrated in preparation for the seminar was finding the organizations and persons, which could be interested in the method of the family mediation. We have found that the method of family mediation is absolutely new in Lithuania so we decided to invite to the seminar organizations/persons who are facing the divorce issues in their everyday work. We established the list of organizations and persons to who we could send the invitations to the seminar.

We began sending the invitations in the beginning of October. We have sent about 200 invitations by e-mail and visited some organizations personally. To the e-mails we attached short description of the project and the registration form. In the first week the response for the seminar was quite big. Organizations and persons were calling and asking for more information mostly about three weeks training in Italy – the number of participants, the fee for this training, etc. They were sending filled in registration forms by e-mail, fax, some participants registered by phone.

We received calls from organizations in different cities of Lithuania; unhappily we had no possibility to pay the travel expenses for those coming from the other cities so only organizations from Kaunas and nearest cities registered to the seminar.

At the end of October we sent the agenda of the seminar to all persons that registered to the seminar.

For the location of the seminar, we searched for the conference room (which could contain more than 30 people) for the acceptable price. We found such room in the hotel near our organization, so we made a reservation and agreed for the breakfast in the beginning of the seminar.

For the ease of the arrival to the seminar for the partners we booked the rooms in the same hotel the seminar will take place. We prepared additional program for the partners including kick-off meeting on the eve of the seminar, time of focus group, lunches and dinners and tour of the city.

In the middle of October, we published the presentation of the MIND project, the information about the method of family mediation and the seminar in our website and added a possibility to download the registration form.

Also we sent e-mails to some journalists, newspapers and local radios. Regrettably, we haven't got any response from them.

We have searched legal frame of mediation in Lithuania and have not found any laws concerning that. But we decided that lawyers could be interested in the method of family mediation, so we sent some invitations to them. One lawyer was participating in the seminar.

Day before the seminar, we had a kick-off meeting of the project partners at restaurant of hotel "Žaliakalnio viešbutis", where the Belgian, Italian, Latvian and Slovenian partners were accommodated. During the dinner, we presented (in an informal way) preparatory work done for the seminar; materials for the event were shared and the general scheme of the seminar was discussed.

2. The day of the seminar, 03.11.2006

At 9 o'clock all participants gathered together for the small breakfast. The main part of the seminar began at 9.30. We registered 30 people to the seminar, 26 attended it. Some participants were working in social sector, other were students from universities, some came from NGO's, Kaunas municipality and other public institutions.

At the beginning of the seminar Liudmila Mecajeva, director of the SIF, said a welcome word to all participants and shortly presented the purpose of the seminar. After that Rossana Casselli, the coordinator of the project, presented the MIND project.

Then all the partners (from Slovenia, Latvia, and Belgium) presented themselves and organizations they are coming from.

The next speaker was Ana Sudžiuvienė, deputy director of Department of Social services from Kaunas city Municipality. She presented the social services for divorced families in Kaunas city.

After this presentation Vaiva Bingelienė, family psychotherapist from public organization “Institute of family relations” presented this organization she is working at and what services they are offering.

Vaiva Bingelienė. Practice of work with divorced families

Family is a solid social psychological formation which is reasoned by interaction of certain people and by meeting their requirements.

There has to be made some terms for self-building of every member. Family should have clear, realistic aims and goals which are acceptable for everybody. It should have rules for intercommunication and safety too. Family is very important institute for children raising, but as the statistic shows – the number of divorces does not declines, the family institution is disregarded.

Public organization *Institute of family relations* is the organization with the attribution of healing, consultation and training. Its main goal is taking care of quality of family life. This goal should be reached by following the principle of systemic thinking that person is a part of family and family is a part of society. When reaching main goal human rights can't be trespassed.

There are psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers, art and occupational therapists, and family mediators working in *Institute of family relations*. Children and whole family can get psychological and psychosocial help here. Institute implements national and international projects oriented to fortifying of interpersonal relationships and to saving family as value.

Families come to *Institute of family relations* by free will or they are sent by service for the protection of children rights. Families that address *Institute of family relations* could be divided to:

- Both partners come who want to separate. Their wishes are very different and both partners have very small motivation to change. Each of them hopes therapist will change his/her partner or he will do a miracle. Both of them give up consultations soon.
- One or both partners come to solve children problems arising in the process of divorce, but they don't want help themselves or change something.
- Mother with children come asking for help or support and take it.
- Partners come on their own initiative, or they are sent by service for the protection of children rights, who are fighting for the right to foster children or where they should live. Such situations are very complicate because parents usually forget the need of their child. Children find themselves in battlefield and they become a tool for revenge. Usually the conclusions of psychologist are needed for punishing partner or to benefit from that.

When working with families specialists are trying to use the principle of systemic thinking: to help to settle new rules, to share children education and occupation. Specialists are trying to show families to collaborate as parents for all life. Children can get help in the day centre of psychosocial rehabilitation or complex psychological help.

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Since Helene van den Steen couldn't attend the seminar, another person on behalf of Belgian partner – Michel Pardaens – presented the method of family mediation, how it can help to solve family conflicts in peaceful way. After a coffee break, Michel Pardaens made his presentation in French. We had an interpreter from French to Lithuanian. Besides, we have in advance translated the presentation and made it in handouts. All this was done in order to give more clear perception of the mediation concept to the participants of the seminar.

At the end of the seminar we had debate, questions and conclusions. Participants of the seminar were interested especially in tree week training – criteria for candidates, program of the training, date of the training and when the candidates should apply for it, will they get the certificate which allows them to work as a family mediator. Participants of the seminar were asked questions for evaluation of the event.

After the seminar partners from abroad had a tour of city, they visited the centre and the old town.

Next day all project partners gathered for focus group and worked on evaluation of the seminars in Latvia and Lithuania. We agreed that family mediation is absolutely new approach in Lithuania, that there are no legislation concerning that and no organizations are performing family mediation. Because of this new approach the interest in training was quite big, 6 participants already expressed their interest in training.