



REPORT: MIND PROJECT MEETING IN SLOVENIA

Preparations and organisation of the MIND project partners and presentation of family mediation method

The preparations have started in the end of June. The date of the MIND project meeting in Slovenia has been fixed for 12 and 13 September 2006.

At the working meeting we have agreed on the concept of the family mediation presentation. In the organisation Slovene Philanthropy we have agreed to organise the seminar starting with a symbolic breakfast where the participants could meet in a comfortable atmosphere.

A major part of preparations of the meeting was concentrated in finding the potential persons and organisations which would be interested in the method of family mediation. We have focused on people/organisations which already perform mediation in Slovenia (those are mostly professionals who intervene in legal disputes and professional working in “Centres for social work”), than we’ve focused on other persons/organisations where the family mediation could be and needed to be introduced. From all the gathered information we have established a list of individuals and organisations which we have sent the invitation to in the end of August. The list was quite divers of individuals of different professions: lawyers, advisors, social workers, pedagogues, teachers, etc. We haven’t invited state officials; however we will send them a notice on family mediation and the meeting in Slovenia and will transmit recommendation on how the state can support the mediation.

The invitations were sent 21 August 2006. We have decided for that date, because the vacations in Slovenia slowly come to an end and more people are back at work for the reason that the invitations

wouldn't get lost or that people wouldn't forget about them. The invitations were sent to approximately 450 individuals or organisations, 400 by e-mail, and 50 by post. In first two week the interest and response for the seminary were big. People called them selves, so we did a large amount of consulting and giving information by telephone. The most frequent questions were concerning the three-week training, the number of participants by organisation and fee for the seminar. We have call the other invited and invited them again to the seminar. People we've called weren't very interested in the seminar. In all we have done more than 400 phone calls and sent around 100 e-mail answering to peoples questions.

Along with the invitation we have also sent application form, so we would know the number of participants, and program of the seminar. The preparations therefore included also a composition of invitation, application form and program.

For the partners of the mind project we have found hotel and made a reservation for two nights and changed the reservations when we got the exact dates of arrivals and departure. We prepared additional program for the partners including the schedule of focus groups, lunches and diners, guide of Ljubljana and have organised everything necessary for the realisation of the program

The preparation for the location of the seminar were oriented in finding the adequate conference room (big enough for more than 40 people and still in the budget), so we made reservations for the conference room and arrange the organisation of the breakfast which was served before the seminar.

The preparations have also included the translation and printing of approximately 1000 brochures: translation of the brochure in Slovene, the review of the translation and arranging the printing.

The Mind project, family mediation method and the role of the Slovene Philanthropy in the project was presented to all invited and all this information was also published on our website.

We have also sent the invitation to the seminar by e-mail to more than 500 journalist, editors, newspapers, radios and television houses. One journalist has attended the seminar. Two telephone interviews were given on the family mediation and the MIND project meeting and one short article appeared in monthly women's magazine "Lepa&zdrava".

A week before the seminar was dedicated to last minute preparations for the seminar. We have searched the legal frame on mediation in Slovenia and have invited the experts in this field to the seminar. We also had to prepare info material for participants and journalist.

Focus group, 12/09/2006

First focus group of the meeting was focused on the seminar and its preparations. All partners were present with the exception Leetonia representative. In the beginning Tereza Novak presented the procedure of preparation and organisation of the meeting (description of the preparations in the first part of the report). We presented the structure of the participants and their previous experience with the mediation. Family mediation in Slovenia is not unknown, few organisations already perform mediation in their work, and many more are interested in performing it. Therefore the interest in the family mediation was big. Every participant has received the material for the seminar. At the focus group we have also determined the program of the seminar.

The dates for meetings in Lithuania and Leetonia were defined and all the partners have agreed on organising the two meeting in the same week as the countries are neighbour countries, what would lower the travel expenses. The end of October and the beginning of November were chosen for the meetings.

An important topic was three-week training for mediators in Lucca, Italy. Once again the focus was on the question which was already main topic at first meeting in Brussels. There was a concern whether the three weeks of training in one period would pose a problem to the candidates. Another solution was proposed: to divide the training on two parts, which wouldn't be the optimal solution from financial point of view and from the point of view regarding the time course of the training. It was decided to ask the opinion of the participants of the seminar. The discussion was focused also on the criteria for selection of the candidates for the training. The following criteria for selection of the training candidates were determined: university degree, knowledge of English, basic knowledge of computer, motivation for work, previous experience in the field, performing the family mediation in the future. Later the partners agreed to define criteria after the meetings in Lithuania and Leetonia.

Presentation of family mediation and focus group, 13/09/2006

The seminar started at 9 o'clock. The participants have been invited before the beginning to gather for breakfast and to meet other participants, which was followed by main part of the seminar at

9h30. 38 participants have applied for the seminar, but only 29 persons have actually attended the presentation (partners and organising staff not included). Regarding the set date (right after holidays) the participation was high. Individuals of different professions have attended to the seminar: counsellors, social workers, a good deal of the presidents of different associations working in social security field, psychologist, program coordinators, a volunteer and already established mediator. The participants came mainly from NGO's, public institutes and Centres for social work.

The program of the seminar:

Tereza Novak presented the MIND project partners and organisations and shortly presented the purpose of the seminar and MIND project, followed by the presentations of the partner organisations from Italy, Lithuania and Leetonia.

Then Helene van den Steen started with introduction to family mediation with an interactive exercise, the role of mediation in peaceful solving conflict situations.

After a short break, Mrs. Katarina Bervar from the Legal-information centre presented the legal frame regarding the mediation in Slovenia.

The conclusion of the seminar was focused on answering the questions of the participants, mostly concerning the three-week training: course, program of the training, criteria for selection of the candidates, the date to apply for the training and if the candidates receive a credible certificate after the training as mediators.

After the seminar the partners have gathered for the evaluation focus group. We have stated that the seminar was well organised, the participants were interested in the given information. It was also stated that the mediation is breaking through in Slovenia. The most know is the mediation in legal procedures, few organisation are however performing family mediation. The interest in training was very big. Ten participants already expressed their interest in the training.

In the end of the meeting the partners have agreed on organising a similar seminar as it was carried out in Slovenia also in Lithuania and Leetonia, but it would be preferable to know more information on the training before the each seminar. It was agreed that the partners from Italy and Belgium provide this information and also that the criteria for the selection of the candidates is determine as soon as possible, as there is little time left and the candidates must be inform as soon as possible.