

European Network Meeting Copenhagen October 2006

England etc.:

A number of developments – especially concerning government legislation – Children in care – FGC should be offered prior to cases going to court – this is written into court practice.

Some of us are government funded. We are working e.g. making best practice, writing a book concerning all views of FGC – toolkit, making standard.

Research – Bath University.

1,5 mill. £ invested in projects – Youth justice board for youth in danger of crime.

When risk of care proceeding then offer of FGC – it is written into court proceeding.

Also FGC in behaviour problems, not attending school.

A steady process, constant commitment

Kent family Group Conference Service – UK:

FGC Service for children under risk of becoming accommodated or subject to care proceedings. Mandatory referral since July 2005. Embedded in KCC Policy and Social work Policy.

FGC Service for Education /Schools at attendance issues + social care issues that have led to lack of attendance at school.

FGC Service for Adults just starting – older persons leaving hospital care or younger adults with learning or physical disability.

Issues for Kent:

Finishing research study – plans and impact on children's care – and embedding implications into practice e.g. How can we make sure plans are implemented – how the family rather than professionals intend it to be implemented.

Accreditation of previous learning/experience towards a nationally recognised qualification for FGC co-ordinators.

Working with The University of Chester.

Daybreak:

Daybreak is a non governmental organisation providing 6 FGC programmes across Central Southern England.

The name Daybreak is a translation of the Maori title of the work that led to the establishment of FGC in New Zealand. It was to honour and acknowledge the Maori roots of the model. We were honoured that the Maori community allowed and approved our naming of our organisation in this way.

We wish to promote an organisation whose culture reflects the value of FGC.

We are particularly interested in the participation of children and young people – and therefore some independent research about the best advocacy + support for children and young people in their meetings. This research is expected to be published soon.

We work with child welfare, domestic violence, education and hope to work with FGC to address elder abuse.

We especially value and appreciate working and sharing with partners across Europe and are very grateful for the work that has gone into today and warm welcome of this conference

Slovakia:

Just beginning. Early state – used to be monopoly for social services. Now also non government organisations can offer services. Change in legal system.

New organisation for preparing foster parents.

We are looking for ideas and experience, for help to start FGC in Slovakia. First team of initiators just educated.

Are preparing conference and evaluation meeting.

FGC – children's home, family in crisis, educational matters.

Norway:

National project – nearly finished. It takes a lot of patience. Project divided in two: research and implementation.

Implementation takes a lot of work: Five full time positions. Aim when started: 100 FGC – because of research, now 300 FGC, this year more than 100 FGC.

More than 90 municipalities have received training. 22 municipalities, not trained – but single cases.

FGC not mainstream in Norway, but now rhetoric is mainstream – fits well in Norwegian democratic system.

Important to consider context. Implementation takes time. Municipalities must have ownership to FGC and the process – important because of structural system with two levels: state and municipality.

Now working in dialog with new municipalities, leaders must be in training + time to reflect.

Co-ordinators – better trained, organised, must have respect for social workers.

FGC must be part of the system. Trying to secure a national system, meaning FGC the same in all of Norway.

Research rapport finished in December.

Future: To look at the evaluation and results. This far it looks good, so we hope to continue.

Sweden:

Have been working with FGC since mid 90'ies, starting with state funds, later on problems with finding funds for e.g. research. Some municipalities are still working with FGC.

Programme: Very much about social work – how you work in the system and meet people – wanting to change the system and the ways it works.

Different standards for co-ordinators in different municipalities.

Trying to break new ground for the use of FGC.

Now we are going back – to look at what we are doing and how to include everybody in the process – both private and professionals.

Also trying to work with elder people and FGC and others who could need it.

Trouble with Research in Sweden, looking a lot at Norway, their results and practice.

Holland:

National project: 15 – 16 projects in Holland. Vision from Maori – families can do much more.

Easy model to work with – because everybody is already doing it in their lives.

Vision for our organisation: Families are more capable within their circles to make solutions.

Working this far five years with FGC, Have a lot of experience. Not only for families – even if child protection is a big part.

We also work with people being released from prison etc.

Implementation strategy: Do as many FGC as you can – best practice – research.

Can we change the law – we do not need to. It already says: The position of the citizen must be strengthened. The problem is the interpretation of the law in the professional system – it is made to fit into custom ways.

Co-working with government to mandate FGC in the laws.

Finland:

FGC is known as concept, but used very little.

1998 – 2000: National project, since almost nothing nation wide, only in single municipalities. The municipalities are responsible for implementation, depending on the individual social worker.

New child welfare act is being negotiated.

Denmark:

Working with FGC since national project, 2000 – 2002.

Moving slowly most places, but in progress. A few municipalities are quite active.

Implementation has been slowed down because of national structural changes, politically decided, counties are closed and municipalities are jointed to bigger units (from 272 municipalities to 98).

Working with implementation with FGC and adults – e.g. homeless and double diagnosed.

Discussing if there should be guidelines concerning implementation – national/by law etc. and how to keep a national standard.

Russia:

Humanitarian organisation "SOS Children's Villages Norway" department in Murmansk has been working in Russia since 2000. We implement the following projects: PRIDE (training program for foster parents and specialists working in the field), Youth Home Centres and FGC program. FGC is the youngest project, it was presented in 2004 for the first time. FGC in Murmansk and Murmansk Region is included in the "Regional Target Program: Supporting Families in Murmansk Region" for years 2006-2010. In order to implement the project we work in close co-operation with the Regional Authorities: with Social Development Committee, Educational Committee, Health Committee. Our organisation has concluded an agreement with the Murmansk State Pedagogical University. In accordance with this agreement we will run training for students, they will learn about FGC and will be able to use FGC while their practice. Besides this co-operation will give a start to research work in this field. We are establishing contacts with schools and some social services in Murmansk for them to be the referrals in the process. The Commission of Juvenile Affairs in one of our main partners. It takes time to run FGC in Murmansk. We would very much like to have 100 conferences or even more, we are working on achievement of this goal.

Co-ordinator training:

Interesting and important discussion.

What is the necessary experience to be a co-ordinator?

Role of co-ordinator: obligations and rights.

Must be agreement on how the co-ordinators do their job – not a job for everyone to do.

Must be possible to differentiate/choose who your co-ordinators are.

This far no specific qualifications. If we could choose: no social workers, at least not any one who works in the social services.

Difference in training: Some places trained first, then decision on being co-ordinator or not, other places: Decision first – then training.

Maybe design a European standard for co-ordinators, now big variations in what is demanded as qualifications.

Children in focus:

Role of social worker, co-ordinator, support person?

Negotiating questions/issues from the child's view.

Child's voice heard: Directly or through parents or social worker: Different interpretations.

What does: Best for the child mean?

Evaluation:

Experiences and ideas for research about initial FGC's that does not reach the stage of a formal conference.

what are the reasons? Family factors? Referral issues? Co-ordinator influence? Social services issues?

There is much known about the actual conference but not about the preparation time in terms of: reasons why a conference is not held.

What influence do the above mentioned themes have on whether a initial FGC becomes an actual conference or not?

Need for long term follow up.

Variations:

FGC can be used for all types of people and situations.

To establish family contact, break isolation, to engage with services, housing, health, employment/training, alcohol/substance abuse, release from prison, from hospital.

Being, belonging, becoming.

The model is adaptable for any situation.

EU funding + FGC network outside Europe:

Linked up internationally – most are approached by people from outside Europe, not organised ways.

Working with linking up organisations to work in more coherent ways in co-working with other countries.

Apply for means to European website, person to update and develop network in between meetings.

Find people with knowledge of EU funding + what is important and in what order?

Meeting in Bratislava in six months.

Next meeting in Berlin November 8th (evening) – 10th 2007.

Themes: Must be room for critical views, national main issues, send paper in advance, implementation, international network,