

Family Group Conference, a citizens approach

European FGC Conference 19 – 21 October 2011, Utrecht, Netherlands

The aim of this conference is to promote FGC as a democratic right and a social responsibility for citizens and consequently as a system change in society. People are always connected to others: an extended family, friends, schools, neighborhoods: social network. Most people rely on their own strengths and self-identified resources to cope with and overcome their challenges. Sometimes, however, more help is needed, but the focus should still be on using inherent strengths to plan for their changes. This is not only true for children and parents but for all citizens having problems in relation to health, labor, welfare, education, etcetera. Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is an empirically-based approach that enables citizens to keep positive control of their lives. Agency and family are two different, sometimes competing systems and these two worlds do not easily mesh. The pioneer work of Christie (1977) argued that 'conflicts' many times are 'stolen' by the State. This also counts for problems. FGC bridges the 'life' and 'system' worlds, reclaiming decision making for citizens. FGC enables everyone who cares about the key persons at risk, to express their feelings and make a plan together. In this way responsibility stays where it belongs, with citizens in charge of their own lives. FGC is a multi-faceted strategy for individuals, families, and communities recognizing and shoulder responsibility for their own people and for public matter. Citizens typically want to be involved in their own decision making. They can participate safely facilitated by community-based, typically informal independent coordinators. Thousands of conferences in many counties in Europe (and all over the world) document that FGC is meaningful and workable across cultures. The change in vision is that citizens who previously were considered to be the problem, now initiate the solutions and not be dependent on the State or welfare agencies. The key to this is directorship over one's own life. This European conference wants to contribute to bringing FGC in Europe's mainstream by reclaiming the decision rights of citizens in their own problems or conflicts and make a change towards true inclusive societies.

Date:

Week 42: 19 – 22 October 2011: 17:00 hour

Pre-conference EU FGC Network Meeting 18 October 2010: 17:00 hour

Venue:

Campus of University of Applied Studies Utrecht, Netherlands (30 km from Amsterdam) – Half an hour by train from Amsterdam Schiphol Airport

Hotels down town Utrecht, excellent public transportation to down town
Participants make reservation in hotels (discounts available).

Number of participants

250 - 350

Participants:

European citizens interested in Family Group Conference

Organisers

Eigen Kracht Centrale, NL

Sponsors

University of Applied Studies Utrecht

Province of Utrecht

Restorative Justice Netherlands

Supporting European FGC Agencies

- Family Group Conference Forum Northern Ireland
- Tower Hamlets, London, UK
- FGC, Naslund Inc. Sweden
- Fundacja "Nadzieja dla Rodzin", Poland
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Preliminary timeframe:

Wednesday 19 th 17.00 – 21.00	- Welcome, - introductions, - theater, - buffet
Thursday 20 th 9.00 – 17.00	- Keynotes - workshops – continuing film festival - lunch provided – conference dinner
Friday 21 th 9.00 – 12:30	- Open Space Technology - lunch provided
Friday 21 th 13:30 – 17:00	- workshops, - roundtable discussions -continuing film festival - closing activity

Participation:

1. Complete conference including 2 x lunch and buffet first day.
2. Separate dinner ticket
3. One-day ticket, participants for Thursday or Friday, including lunch

Program elements

- Key note speakers
- Workshops
- Open Space Technology
- Round table - Research groups - Interest groups
- Film festival – ongoing FGC related films
- Opening or closing theatre

Communication

www.familygroupconference.eu and www.fgc.eu

- announce at European FGC Network (Brighton, November 2010)
- announce to all contacts in Europe, through networks of guest speakers, websites, organizations, etcetera